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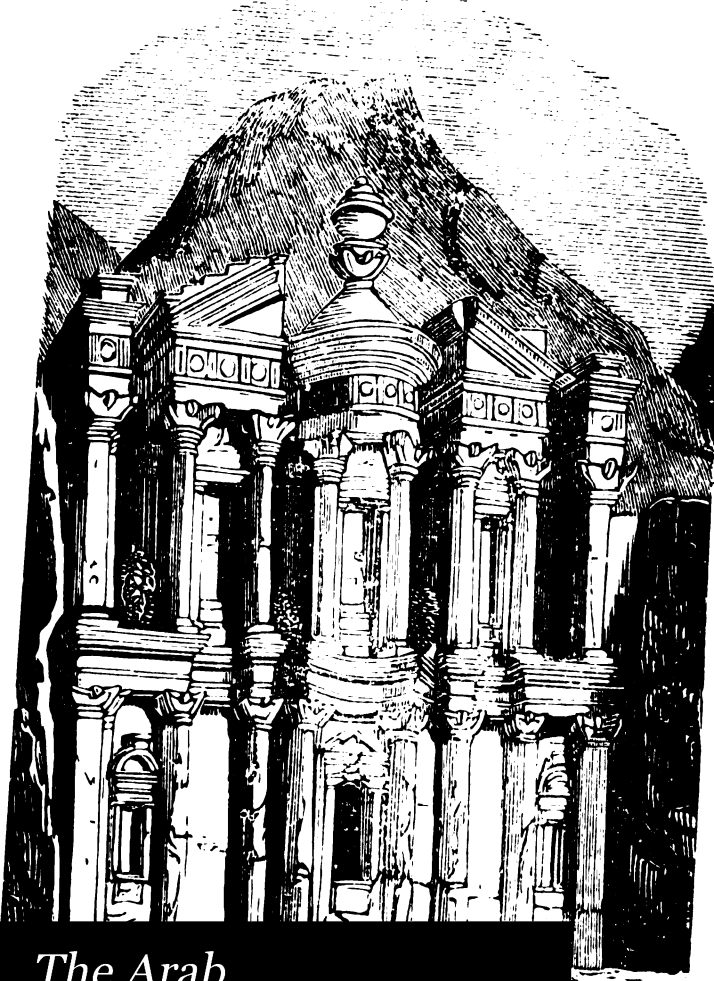
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The Arab

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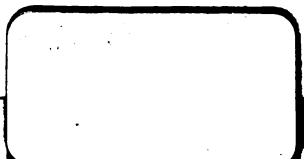


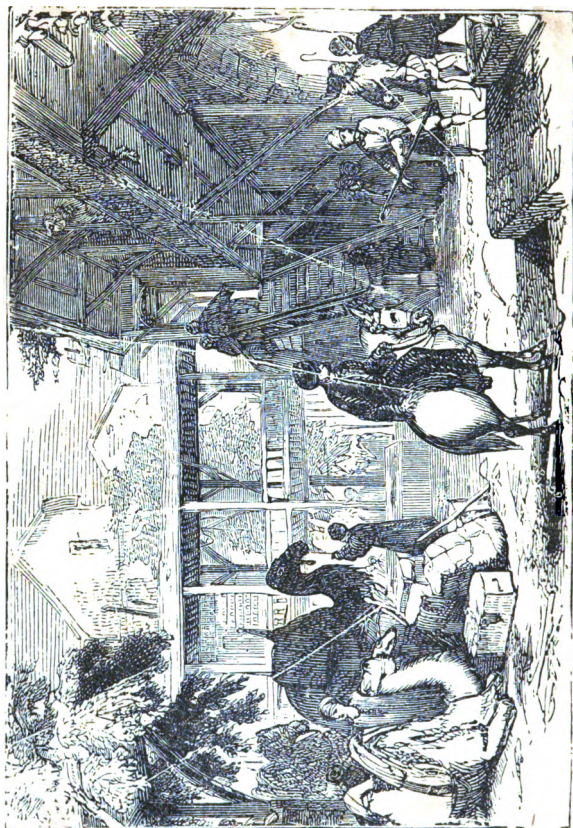
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Prof. C. H. Joy

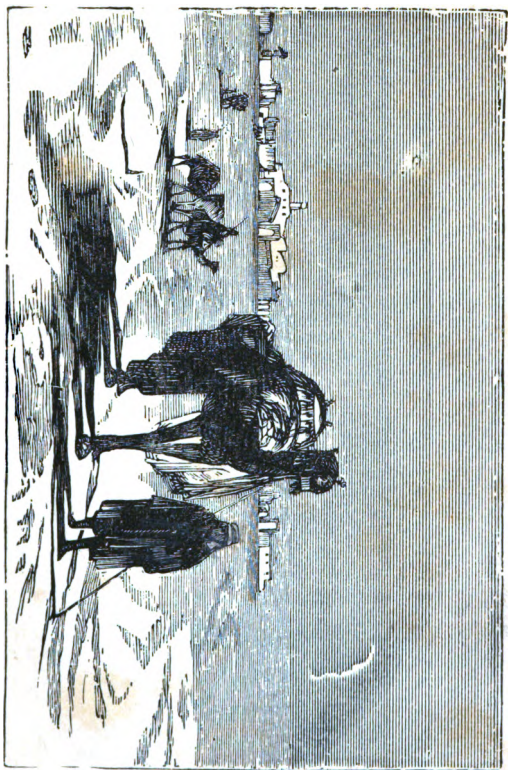
15 Oct., 1903.





THE CARAVANSERAI.





ARABIAN DESERT.

THE A R A B.

"The weary Arabs roam from plain to plain,
 Guiding the languid herd in quest of food ;
 And shift their little home's uncertain scene,
 With frequent farewell ; strangers, pilgrims, all,
 As were their fathers." DYER.

PHILADELPHIA :
 JAMES CHALLEN & SONS.

1857.

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Prof. G. H. Joy.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Interesting associations with Arabia—The Country described—Soil and Climate	9—15

CHAPTER II.

Vegetation of Arabia—The Coffee-plant—The Date-palm—Animals of the Country—The Gazelle—The Ass—The Horse—The Camel—Reptiles—Poisonous Serpents .	16—31
--	-------

CHAPTER III.

Mount Sinai—Towns of Arabia—Muscat—Bediah—Minna—Mecca—Medina—The City of Petra	31—48
--	-------

CHAPTER IV.

Sketch of Mohammed—The Koran—The Caliphs—The Saracens—Splendor of Bagdad—Literature and Science of the Arabs—Dissolution of the Saracen Empire .	48—75
--	-------

(7)

CHAPTER V.

	PAGE
Prophecy in reference to Ishmael—Its memorable Fulfilment—Objections of Gibbon—Their refutation . . .	75—91

CHAPTER VI.

Physical Character of the Bedouin—Their Manners and Customs—Their deficiency in Mechanical Arts—Their love of Music—Their Plunder	92—124
---	--------

CHAPTER VII.

Ceremonies at Mecca—Decline of the Pilgrimage—State and Character of the Arabs	124—145
--	---------

THE ARAB.

CHAPTER I.

INTERESTING ASSOCIATIONS WITH ARABIA—THE COUNTRY DESCRIBED—SOIL AND CLIMATE.

THE associations connected with Arabia are more sacred and abiding than they can be with any country on the face of the earth, excepting Palestine. Here the patriarch Job passed his life, darkened by affliction and brightened by prosperity. Moses, a stranger and a shepherd, beheld in this land the bush that burned with fire, but was not consumed. Arabia afforded an asylum to Elijah from relentless persecution. It presented, too, the memorable scene where Divine power and mercy were displayed in the journeyings of the Israelites, after their deliverance from

(9)

Egypt. They were to pass through a waste howling wilderness to Canaan, the land promised to their fathers. Never was there, never will there be again, such a pilgrimage as theirs.

Burckhardt, better acquainted with the modern inhabitants than any other traveller, has remarked, that even "the sacred history of the children of Israel will never be properly understood, so long as we are not minutely acquainted with everything relating to the Bedouin Arabs, and the countries in which they move and pasture." We enter, therefore, on a consideration of these circumstances, persuaded that in so doing a valuable light will be cast, not only on general knowledge, but on sacred literature.

The entire surface of Arabia is about four times that of France. Though pertaining to Asia, it appears, from its position and physical character, rather to belong to Africa.

The name of Arabia, in its proper acceptation, comprehends the peninsula as far as the isthmus which runs from the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akaba to the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab. In a more extensive sense, it is made to comprehend also a large tract north of the isth-

mus, reaching as far as the river Euphrates on the east, and the south-eastern angle of the Mediterranean on the west.

In early times, the Hebrews included a part of what we call Arabia among the countries they vaguely designated the East. Thus, Abraham is said to have sent away the sons of Hagar and Keturah to the east country, which appears, in this instance, to have been the northern division of Arabia. The patriarch Job is described as the greatest of all the men of the East; and, though opinions differ as to the precise locality of the land of Uz, yet it is commonly agreed that it was in some part of Arabia. In the Book of Judges, among the allies of the Midianites and Amalekites, tribes of the north, are mentioned "the Beni-Kedem," sons of the East, which Josephus translates by the Greek word for Arabs. It is, however, to be remarked, that, though in Scripture Kedem most clearly denotes North Arabia, it is also used for countries further east.

The Arabs divide the great wilderness of the Arabian Desert into three parts, and denominate them according to their proximity to the respective countries. One part is designated Badiah-el-

Irak (Babylonia), and from this word, Badiah, comes the name of the nomadic tribes by whom it is traversed—Bedawees, better known to us by the French corruption of *Bedouin*.* These people are not, however, confined to this part of Arabia, but roam throughout the entire region.

Various speculations have arisen as to the derivation of the term “Arab;” but the most obvious one is from the Hebrew word “Arabah,” which signifies in general a steppe, a plain, or desert place.

The early geographers maintain only two divisions—Happy, and Desert Arabia. But after the city of Petra, in Idumæa, had become celebrated as the metropolis of a commercial people, a third division was denominated Arabia Petræa. Ptolemy flourished in the second century: and this threefold division, which occurs first in his works, has obtained throughout Europe ever since.

Arabia Felix, or the Happy Arabia, has been supposed to derive its name from the variety and richness of its natural productions, as compared

* Pronounced by the Arabs *Bedaween*. Dr. Smith's orthography is *Bedawin*.

with those of the other divisions. It lies between the Red Sea on the west, and the Persian Gulf on the east; it includes by far the greater part of the country known to us as Arabia, which continues to the present day only imperfectly explored.

Desert Arabia takes in that portion of the country which lies north of Arabia Felix, and is bounded on the north-east by the Euphrates, on the north-west by Syria, and on the west by Palestine and Arabia Petræa. So far as it has been explored, it appears to be one continuous, elevated, interminable steppe, intersected occasionally by ranges of hills.

Arabia Petræa embraces all the northern and western portions of the country, being bounded on the east by Desert and Happy Arabia; on the north by Palestine and the Mediterranean; on the west by Egypt, and on the south by the Red Sea. Many European travellers have lately visited these portions of Arabia, and it is consequently much better known than any other part.

The whole peninsula of Arabia, so far as at present explored, consists of an elevated tableland, declining on the north towards the Syrian

Desert, and encircled along the sea-coast with a belt of flat, sandy ground.

The early writer, Arrian, mentions Muza as a seaport of Arabia Felix: it is now several miles distant from the sea. The harbour of Jidda is formed by innumerable reefs of coral. In the southern part of the Arabian Gulf, the banks of this substance are less numerous. As it is soft and easily wrought, this marine production is preferred to all others for the purpose of building. Most of the houses in Tehâma are constructed of this material; and hence it has been said, that "each one is a cabinet of natural history."

The low land of Arabia is occasionally for many years destitute of rain, but sometimes it is scantily watered by slight showers during the months of March and April. In the arid tracts the dews are said to be copious. The high land has its regular rainy season, which begins about the middle of June, and continues till the end of September. Springs also abound in the loftier mountains, which, when fed by the copious annual rains, send streams of water through the valleys.

The sky in these deserts is generally cloudless; but the burning heat of the sun is moderated by cooling winds, which often raise fearful tempests of sand and dust. We read in Scripture of "the east wind," and "the wind from the desert," which is probably the simoom, a word Anglicised from the Arabic word, and meaning "poisonous."

These winds seem to derive their noxious qualities from passing over the great sandy desert when scorched by the intense rays of the tropical sun. Ali Bey states, that, at Jidda, "the north wind, traversing the desert, arrives in such a state of dryness, that the skin is parched, paper cracks as if it were in the mouth of an oven, and the air is always loaded with sand. If the wind changes to the south, everything is in the opposite extreme: the air is damp, everything handled feels of a clammy wetness, and the atmosphere appears to be loaded with a sort of fog." The nature of the winds, therefore, seems generally to differ according to the tract over which they have passed.

CHAPTER II.

VEGETATION OF ARABIA—THE COFFEE-PLANT—THE DATE PALM—ANIMALS OF THE COUNTRY—THE GAZELLE—THE ASS—THE HORSE—THE CAMEL—REPTILES—POISONOUS SERPENTS.

NEITHER the soil nor the climate of the greater part of Arabia is favorable to vegetation, and consequently the plants cannot be so varied or abundant as in many other lands. So intense, indeed, is the heat of the sun, that the flowers are frequently withered as soon as they blow. There is, however, a considerable number of plants common to colder and warmer regions. The Arabs cultivate many of the culinary vegetables with which we are familiar. Wild pumpkins and melons are used as food for camels. Melons raised in the fields are so plentiful, that, for some part of the year, they are the chief article of food to the people of all ranks. Just before the fruit is ripe, the rind is pierced, the apertures filled with wax, the melon is left on its stalk, and the pulp is changed in a few days to a delicious liquid.

The sandy plains yield some agreeable objects to the eye of the traveller, and plants which alleviate the thirst of the camel in its long and wearisome journeys. Content with a dry and hard fare, these animals browse with pleasure on prickly herbs and shrubs. One kind, which the camel rejects, is eaten by the ass. Another plant is prepared by the Bedouins as bread, and they eat it as readily as we do the best produce of our fields. Here, too, is a favorite soil of the rose of Jericho. Lavender, marjoram, and pinks, may also be gathered, while lilies appear, adding their charms to the scene.

Some flowers are lovely, large, and of the brightest hues. It seems strange, but is nevertheless true, that the peasants in many parts of Arabia, whom we should think indifferent to such objects, array themselves on festive occasions with chaplets and garlands, according to ancient and widely-spread customs.

Nor is Arabia without plants which are of special service. One, of insignificant appearance, yields an abundance of alkaline salt, which bleaches linen, and is employed by the common people instead of soap. Other shrubs are burnt

into charcoal for the market at Cairo. The indigo shrub is universally cultivated for the blue it yields, which is the favorite color of the Arabs. The infusion of a gray-colored herb, when mixed with a certain quantity of meal, is used as a leaven to ferment both bread and beer, and to them it adds an agreeable flavor. The common kali grows in great abundance on the coasts, and in the islands of the Red Sea. A sort of bulrush, or panic-grass, is used for roofing houses, which, as rains are unfrequent, is sufficient as a covering. One kind of field-reed attains the gigantic height of twenty-four feet; it is very plentiful near Suez, and is an article of commerce, being sent to Yemen, where it is employed in ceiling houses.

If Arabia Felix is not the native country of coffee, it is the favored spot where this plant arrives at the greatest perfection. It is a production of the highest value. Some say it is a native of Upper Ethiopia, whence it was introduced to Arabia; others consider it an aboriginal of Yemen. Bruce maintains that it grows spontaneously in Abyssinia, being found wild in the greatest abundance from Caffa to the banks of

the Nile. In that country, indeed, it has been considered to be cultivated from time immemorial; and the same author tells us, that the Guilæ, a wandering tribe of Africans, in their incursions into Abyssinia, being obliged to traverse immense deserts, carry with them nothing to eat but coffee, roasted till it can be pulverized, and then mixed to a consistency that will permit of its being rolled up in balls and put into a leathern bag. One of these, about the size of a small ball, keeps them, they say, in strength and spirits during a whole day's fatigue, better than a loaf of bread or a meal of meat. Be this as it may, it is from Arabia that Europe first became acquainted with coffee; and it is from Arabia that the islands of the West have derived it.

The plant grows to the height of forty or fifty feet, with a stem four or five inches in diameter. Its copious evergreen foliage, white flowers, and red berries, are too well known in the stores of our own country to need description. The Mocha coffee, as the seeds of the berry cultivated in Arabia are called, is distinguished from the coffee of other countries by the roundness and smallness of the grain; the reason of which is, that

one of the two seeds in the berry is abortive, and the other assumes a rounded form for want of the mutual pressure that would otherwise have been given. The superior quality depends partly on the time and manner of gathering Mocha coffee, and still more, perhaps, on the soil and site chosen for the cultivation of the plants. The best sort is grown on the mountains of Hadje, about sixteen miles east of Beit-el-Fakieh, a spot of which we have a description in the first volume of *Voyages en Arabie*, by Niebuhr. "My travelling companions," says he, "whom I had expected to find at Hadje, were in the gardens on the mountain where the coffee grows. I followed them thither the next day, taking nearly an east-south-east direction, towards Kusona; and I overtook them at Balgose, one of the villages which principally depend for subsistence on the culture of coffee. Neither asses nor mules can be used in climbing these mountains: it is necessary to ascend the steep places by a road, which, being only mended at wide intervals, is extremely bad. To me, however, who had just quitted the arid and sandy plains of Tehâma, where I had been accustomed to walk-

ing, it appeared delightful, as I was surrounded on all sides by gardens, which formed the principal plantations of coffee.

“It was only near Kahlma that I had seen a single hill of those long and pentagonal stones that I witnessed in other places, but here a great portion of the mountain seemed to consist of this sort of stone: the detached rocks, likewise composed of it, presented a striking appearance, especially where water was trickling from the summit of the rocks, and formed cascades which appeared as if supported on little upright columns. It is easy to detach these stones from the rocks, and they are used to make steps on the road, as well as for the walls with which it is needful to prop up the gardens where coffee is grown, on the slope of the mountains; from which it appears that these stones are very serviceable to the inhabitants of this hilly country.

“The tree that produces coffee is well known in Europe. It was covered with flowers near Bulgose, which diffused an agreeable scent. All the gardens are situated on platforms one above another. Some are only watered by rain; in others there are large reservoirs on the higher

parts, whence the water is conducted and distributed over all the beds, where the trees are grown so close together that the sun cannot make its way between them. We are told that the trees thus artificially irrigated bore fruit twice a year, but that the beans ripened only once; those of the second crop, which did not attain to complete maturity, being inferior to the first."

All the Arabs are extravagantly fond of coffee; and the general mode of preparing it greatly improves its flavor. They do not grind it in a mill, but reduce it to an impalpable powder in a close mortar, thus better expressing and preserving from evaporation the oily particles of the berry, and giving to the decoction a peculiar relish. They are also very particular in preparing the beverage, which all classes use without milk or sugar. People of rank drink it out of porcelain cups, their inferiors employ a coarser ware; and in some places it is served up to travellers in small earthen pots like bottles, which contain from ten to fifteen cups. Mr. Lushington observed, when a lady paid a visit at Mocha, she carried on her arm a little bag of coffee, which is boiled at the house where she enjoys

the society of her friends, without putting them to any expense. The Bedouin prepares his coffee as rudely as he provides for himself in other ways.

Burkhardt describes gum-arabic as the produce of the talh. He says that the Bedouin in some parts feed their camels on the thorny branches of this shrub. They collect the gum in summer, and sell it at Cairo for about twelve or fifteen shillings the hundred weight. The taste is insipid, but the substance appears to be very nutritious. An Abyssinian caravan, indeed, crossing the African desert to Cairo, finding their provisions exhausted, had recourse to gum-arabic, of which they had a considerable quantity, and upon this alone one thousand persons subsisted for two months.

The plants of Arabia endowed with a medicinal property must not be overlooked. Here appears, indeed, the first curative means which were applied by the Arabs, at a remote period, with signal success. Thus they discovered and used plants as counteractive of poison, to which they were exposed, from the bite of venomous animals which infested their country. The

prickly caper is considered an effectual antidote against all kinds of poison. That which we call Senna of Alexandria is sold by the natives at Mecca and Jidda, whence it passes by way of Egypt to the Mediterranean ports. Other plants familiar to us are also used by the Arabs.

The almond, fig, and walnut trees are, in Arabia Felix, of enormous size; and so thickly does the fruit cluster on the orange and the lime, that at times only a small part can be gathered. Such spots present, indeed, an extraordinary scene, and one unequalled in any other part of the earth. "Of this," says Lieutenant Wellsted, to whom we are indebted for much valuable information, "nothing can furnish a more striking idea than the list of their productions, all of which are frequently reared on a plot of ground not more than three hundred yards in diameter; and I can confidently state, that no equal space, in any part of the world, will afford a catalogue more numerous and varied, more luxuriant in growth, and more perfect in form."

One tree is entitled to special notice; it is the date palm, the fruit of which constitutes the staple nourishment of the Arabs during the

greater part of the year. Some places have a peculiar use for this produce, but almost every district has its own variety. Upwards of a hundred different sorts are said to grow in the immediate neighborhood of Medina. The cheapest kind is the *heleya*, a very small date about the size of a mulberry: it equals in sweetness the finest figs from Smyrna, and when dried, is covered, like them, with a saccharine crust. Another, the *birni*, is the most wholesome. It was a favorite with Mohammed, and he recommended the Arabs to eat some of these dates every morning before breakfast. Dates are dressed in a variety of ways; they are boiled, stewed with butter, or reduced to a thick pulp by simmering in water, over which honey is poured. The Arabs say that "a good housewife may furnish her husband every day for a month with a dish of dates differently prepared."

Nor is this all. The timber of the date palm serves for rafters or firewood, the fibres for cordage, and the leaves for cages, baskets, boxes, cradles, and even bedsteads. The kernels, after being soaked in water for two days, until they become soft, are given as food to camels, cows,

and sheep, instead of barley, than which they are considered more nutritive. There are shops at Medina where nothing is sold but date stones; and in all the main streets beggars are occupied in picking up those that are thrown away.

The Arabs rear in great numbers all the domestic animals common to hot countries. Their oxen and cows have a hump or bunch of fat on the shoulders, immediately above the fore-legs. Buffaloes are found in the marshy parts of the country, and on the banks of the rivers, where they are more numerous than the common horned cattle. The male is as fit for the yoke as the ox, and the female yields more milk than the ordinary cow.

Of asses there are two kinds: one small, sluggish, and but little esteemed; the other large, and high-spirited, which is sold at a considerable price.

The sandy plains and the valleys of the mountains are stocked with gazelles. Of these beautiful creatures poets have often written. The Arabs of the desert still follow them in the chase, and obtain from them a supply of food.

The Arabian horses are well known to be the

finest in the world; but the idea that they are found wild in the desert, as asserted by the old writers, is now justly exploded. Major Smith is of opinion that this noble animal was aboriginal in Great Tartary. In no country is the horse more esteemed, or his faculties in consequence more developed, than in Arabia. The wandering Arab of the desert places his highest happiness in his horses, and is so attached to them, that they are more his companions than his servants. An Arabian horse will generally carry his master from eighteen to twenty leagues a day. These animals perspire little, and possess in the most eminent degree the qualities of endurance, vigor, and admirable temper.

The affectionate terms on which Arab families live with their horses sometimes causes extreme regret when they are obliged from necessity to sell them. D'Arvieux mentions a Syrian merchant, who cried most tenderly while caressing his mare, whose genealogy he said he could trace for five hundred years.

Of the service of the camel to the Arab it is difficult to speak too highly. There are two kinds of camel, one having two hunches on its back,

and the other, which is the Arabian camel, having but one. It is found in the countries extending from India to Arabia, and along the northern regions of Africa. It is frequently denominated the dromedary, but the term is not altogether applicable, the word being of Greek origin, and used in reference to the lighter and fleet breeds of both species, the one being to the other what the hunter is to the heavy draught-horse. So swift is this animal, that the Arabs, in their figurative description of him, say, "When thou shalt meet a *heirie*, and say to the rider *Salam alic*! ('Peace be between us!') ere he shall have answered thee, *Alic salam*! ('There is peace between us!') he will be far off and nearly out of sight, for his swiftness is like the wind." Seventy or a hundred miles a day, and continued in the same ratio for successive days, is by no means an unusual speed of travelling; and it is stated that six hundred and thirty miles have been performed in five days. The Chinese give him the appellation of "the camel with the feet of the wind." The more common camel has been well denominated "the ship of the desert." Every part of his structure is suitable to the situation

he is intended to occupy, some of the peculiarities of which it will not be superfluous to mention.

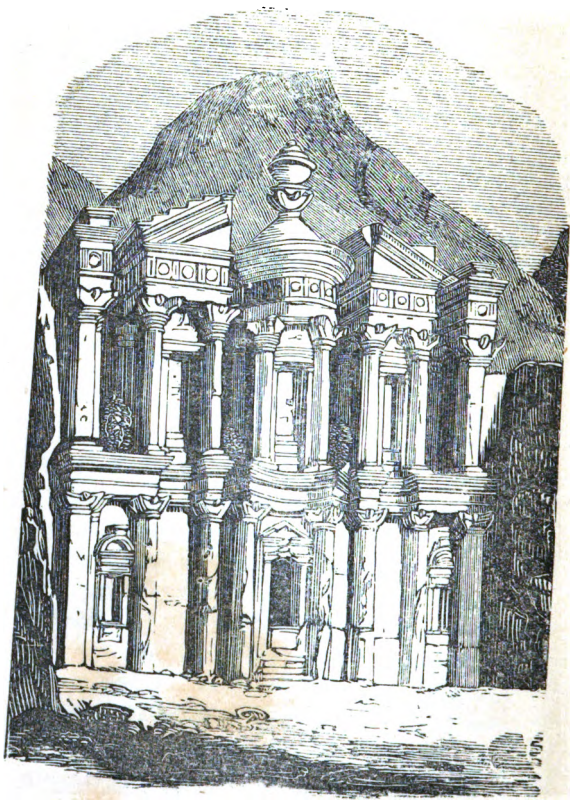
The eye is protected by an overhanging lid ; so that, while a keenness in its power of vision is allowed, protection from the heat of the sun is afforded. The fine particles of sand with which the air is loaded when the hot winds prevail, if not provided against, would occasion much pain to the camel, by impeding respiration. But this is obviated by the peculiar division of the nostril into slits, which he can close and open at will. Thus, by respiring gradually and gently, the suffocating mass is excluded, and the journey is continued as if there were nothing to occasion interruption. Frugal, temperate, hardy, and strong, the deserts are traversed with comparative ease ; and thus, while requiring little for his support, the camel bestows the greatest advantages on his master.

While goods are conveyed on his back, his side affords a shelter from a whirlwind of sand, or a pillow on which the weary head finds rest. Patient under his arduous labors, he treads the endless sands at the desire of his master, kneeling at his command, requiring no stick or spur

to induce him to increase his pace, but encouraged by the Arab melodies which are cheerfully sung. And when age or accident have deprived him of life, his hair furnishes clothes and tents, and his skin is made into belts, sandals, saddles, and buckets.

Little opportunity has hitherto been afforded to examine the winged tribes of Arabia. In the fertile districts, however, tame fowls and all kinds of poultry are very plentiful. The ostrich freely roams in the deserts. Several birds of prey have been observed by travellers, among which the vulture is of great service, removing carcasses, which corrupt very rapidly, and also destroying the field-mice, which multiply so prodigiously in some districts, that, were it not for the vulture, the peasant would cultivate his fields in vain.

In some places, the land-tortoise is numerous, as are also the lizard-tribe. Scorpions abound in the deserts, still infesting the confines of Palestine as they did when the Israelites "passed through that great and terrible wilderness." Ali Bey saw one, of a sallow color, and almost six inches long, in the great court of the temple at Mecca. Of serpents there are several kinds,



PETRA.

with the following results:

Year	Number of cases
1950	10
1951	15
1952	20
1953	25
1954	30
1955	35
1956	40
1957	45
1958	50
1959	55
1960	60
1961	65
1962	70
1963	75
1964	80
1965	85
1966	90
1967	95
1968	100
1969	105
1970	110
1971	115
1972	120
1973	125
1974	130
1975	135
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2081	665
2082	670
2083	675
2084	680
2085	685
2086	690
2087	695
2088	700
2089	705
2090	710
2091	715
2092	720
2093	725
2094	730
2095	735
2096	740
2097	745
2098	750
2099	755
2100	760

law to land before the end of the 19th century. The law says that the land is to be used for agriculture, and the law describes the process of land use.

Feddan—the Phara of Ptolemy the geographer, is whose time it gave its name to the Sinaitic country—and which some have supposed to be the same as El Paran in the wilderness, to which Cheops and his associate kings caused the Hebrews to be sent. He then proceeds:—“As he returned after passing the ruined



PETRA.

whose bite is mortal. It was while traversing the wilds "from Hor to the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom," that many of the Israelites were destroyed by these venomous reptiles, for their rebellion against the Most High.

CHAPTER III.

MOUNT SINAI—TOWNS OF ARABIA—MUSCAT—BEDIAH—
MINNA—MECCA—MEDINA—THE CITY OF PETRA.

IT is now desirable to glance at some of those places in Arabia which have a peculiar interest; and certainly the spot where Jehovah gave his law to Israel claims our first regard. Lord Lindsay describes the ruins of the ancient town of Feiran—the Phara of Ptolemy the geographer, in whose time it gave its name to the Sinaite promontory—and which some have supposed to be the El Paran in the wilderness, to which Chedar Laomer and his associate kings chased the Horites of Mount Seir. He then proceeds:—
"At the first turning after passing the ruined

town, a most superb view of Gebel Serbal opened on us,—every craig and pinnacle of his five peaks relieved clearly against a sky of the most delicious blue, and perfectly cloudless; the pale moon, about half full, sailing in the pure ether above us—the eye could pierce far beyond her. Gebel Serbal was of a bluish-gray, but the jagged rocks of the valley, forming the foreground of the picture, were black, the bright lights and deep broad shadows rendering them perfectly beautiful. I sat on my dromedary under a tarfa-tree, enjoying the shade and a delightful breeze, and talking with the Bedouin. And was not that Mount Paran?"

Lindsay afterwards refers to the different opinions entertained as to the precise spot where the Law was given to Moses, and then adds:—"Yet what, after all, avails the inquiry, if we think merely of the stage and not of the action performed on it? This is the wilderness of Sinai—there can be no doubt of that; and, whichever the individual mount was, every hill around heard the thunder, and quaked at the sound of the trumpet, waxing louder and louder, as God descended in the cloud, and trembled at the

‘still small voice,’ that, deeper than the thunder, and high above the trumpet, spoke to every man’s ear and heart that fiery law, holy, just, and good, which requires of man that spotless obedience which he cannot yield, and at the first transgression, even in thought, of its purity, lays him under the curse of eternal death: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself.’ One only of Adam’s seed, the man Christ Jesus, has fulfilled that law. We must travel to Jerusalem, we must look to the cross on Calvary, to know the way in which we may fulfil it.”

The town of Maskat, according to Wellsted, is situated at the extremity of a small cove, in the gorges of an extensive pass, which widens from this point as it advances into the interior. On either side, the cove hills, to the height of from three to five hundred feet, rise almost perpendicularly from the sea, and appear lined with forts, which, considering they belong to the vicinity of an Arab town, are in a tolerable state of repair. The largest and most commanding are erected on either side, at the inner extremity of the cove; and within that on the western

side state prisoners are confined. Two half-moon batteries also command the entrance: the guns appear well mounted, and the guard at all seasons on the alert. The distance across from fort to fort is only half a mile; so that an open attack in the day-time would be very difficult if these were well served.

To persons arriving from seaward, Maskat, with its forts and contiguous hills, has an extraordinary and romantic appearance. Not a tree, shrub, or other trace of vegetation is visible; and the whitened surface of the houses, and turreted forts in the vicinity, contrast in a singular manner with the burned and cindery aspect of the darkened masses of rock around. Similar in its aspect to most eastern cities when viewed from a distance, the level roofs of the dwellings, the domes of mosques, their lofty minarets, and other prominent features, are first discerned, but on landing the illusion quickly appears. Narrow, crowded streets, and filthy bazaars, nearly blocked up by porters bearing burdens of dates, grain, &c.; wretched huts intermingled with low and paltry houses, the owners of which, seated on a small projecting part before their

door, are merely sheltered from the heat of the sun by tattered canvass awnings; and other dwellings, more than half fallen into decay, but which yet continue tenanted, meet the eye in every direction. There are, nevertheless, within the town several substantial, handsome houses; the palace of the Iman, and those belonging to the old princes and his mother, the governors, and several others, being of the latter description.

Some of the towns, as, for instance, that of Bediah, and nearly all those of the interior of Oman, are erected in artificial hollows, which have been excavated to the depth of six or eight feet; and the soil thus removed is left in hillocks around their margins. They owe their fertility to a happy and peculiar mode of conducting water to them. The greater part of the face of the country being destitute of running streams on the surface, a certain class of men among the Arabs seek in elevated plains for springs or fountains. When one is found, a channel with a very slight descent is bored in the required direction, leaving apertures at regular distances, to give light and air to those who are occasionally sent to keep it clean. Water is frequently con-

ducted by these means for a distance of six or eight miles, and an unlimited supply is thus secured. The channels are usually about four feet broad and two deep, and contain a clear and rapid stream. There are few of the large towns but have four or five streams running into them.

The isolated spots to which water is thus conveyed possess so fertile a soil, that nearly every grain, fruit, or vegetable, common to India, Persia, or Arabia, is produced almost spontaneously. The tales told of the oases are marvellous, but not exaggerated. A single step conducts the traveller from the glare and sand of the desert into a fertile tract, watered by a hundred rills, teeming with the most luxuriant vegetation, and encircled by lofty trees and umbrageous foliage, which even the fiercest rays of the noon-tide sun are unable to penetrate.

"Minna," says the traveller just quoted, "differs from other towns in having its cultivation in the open fields. As we crossed these, with lofty almond, citron, and orange trees, yielding a delicious fragrance on either hand, exclamations of astonishment and admiration burst from us. 'Is this Arabia?' we said; 'this the

country we have looked on heretofore as a desert?" Verdant fields of grain and sugar-cane stretching along for miles are before us; streams of water, flowing in all directions, intersect our path; and the happy and contented appearance of the peasants helps to fill up the smiling picture. The atmosphere was clear and pure, and, as we trotted joyously along, giving or returning the salutation of peace or welcome, I could almost fancy we had at last reached that 'Araby the Blessed,' which I have been accustomed to regard as existing only in the fictions of our poets."

The city of Mecca is erected in a very narrow valley, and from its position a good view of it cannot be obtained. "If I went out at either end," says Ali Bey, "the mountains allowed me to discern only a few houses; and if I went out at the sides, I found myself upon the side of the mountains, whence I could perceive nothing but an irregular surface of flat roofs, without any perspective." The principal streets are regular; and the houses, which are sanded, level, and very convenient, have a pleasing appearance.

The Temple of Mecca is situated nearly in the middle of the city. The only part which lays

claim to high antiquity is the Kaaba, called by Mohammedans the House of God. It is a quadrilateral tower, the sides and angles of which are unequal. The size of the edifice, and the black cloth which covers it, give the figure of a perfect square. It is built of square-hewn, but unpolished stones, brought from the neighboring mountains. Its height is thirty-four feet four inches, and the sides vary from twenty-nine to thirty-eight feet in length. A black stone is "incrusted" in the angle formed by the N. E. and S. E. sides, and is believed to face exactly the east. It is raised forty-two inches above the pavement, and is bordered all round with a large plate of silver, about a foot broad.

To this block has been given the name of "the heavenly stone," from its being believed by all true Moslems to have been presented to Abraham by the angel Gabriel. There is a legend that originally it was a transparent hyacinth, but that, from the sins of the multitudes who kiss it, it has become black and opaque. It is, in fact, a fragment of volcanic basalt, sprinkled throughout with small, pointed, colored crystals, and varied with red feldspar on a dark, coal-like

ground, excepting one of its protuberances, which is a little reddish. It is discovered through an opening in the black cloth, which covers the whole of the building except the base.

On the N. W. side of the Kaaba there is a sort of parapet, enclosing a semicircular place, paved with very fine marble. Between this parapet and the body of the Kaaba is a space of about six feet, leaving a passage on either side. Here Moslems suppose that Ishmael was buried. The basement of the building is of marble. Large bronze rings are fixed in it at regular distances all round, to which is fastened, by strings, the lower border of the black cloth that covers the walls. The threshold of the entrance is about six feet above the pavement. There are folding-doors of wood plated over with silver, and fastened with an enormous silver padlock. Except in extraordinary cases, this door is opened only twice a year: it is then entered by a sort of ladder staircase, about eight feet wide, and consisting of ten steps, with rails on each side, mounted on six large rollers.

The interior of the Kaaba consists simply of a room or hall. Its double roof is supported

within by three octagonal pillars of aloes-wood; between which, on a bar of iron, hang some silver lamps. The outside is covered with rich black damask, adorned with an embroidered band of gold, which is changed every year, and was formerly sent by the caliphs, afterwards by the sultans of Egypt, and more recently was provided by the Turkish emperors. The Kaaba at some distance is almost surrounded by a circular enclosure of pillars, joined towards the bottom by a low balustrade, and towards the top by bars of silver. Just within this inner enclosure, on the south, north, and west sides of the Kaaba, are three buildings, which are the oratories, or places where those of the orthodox sect assemble to perform their devotions.

Another building faces the door of the Kaaba, at the distance of thirty-four feet. The roof is supported by six pilasters, rather more than six feet high. The half of the enclosure nearest the Kaaba is surrounded with a fine railing of bronze, the door of which is always kept fastened with a silver padlock. This railing encloses a sort of sarcophagus, hung with a black cloth magnificently embroidered with gold and silver,

and having large golden acorns attached to it. With this is connected another superstitious tale—"that it served Abraham for a footstool to construct the Kaaba, and increased in height as the building advanced." It is, of course, *equally* true with the tale that "the stones came out miraculously, already squared, from the spot where the footstool now stands, and passed into Ishmael's hands, and thence into his father's."

Medina is a small town, but walled round, and has a mosque, which, though remarkable, is not near so large as the temple at Mecca. In one corner of the mosque is built a place of about fourteen paces square, about which are great windows, fenced with brass grates: the inside is decked with lamps and ornaments, and it is arched overhead. In the centre is the tomb of Mohammed, having silk curtains all around it like a bed, which conceal it from view. None enter it but the persons appointed to cleanse it, to light the lamps which burn there by night, and to watch over it. All that the pilgrims can do is to thrust in their hands at the windows, between the brass grates, and to offer petitions, to which Mohammed can give no audience.

There is one city of extraordinary interest, the ruins of which still exist in the Wady Musa, two days' journey from the Dead Sea, and the same distance north-east of Akaba.

A vigorous description will be found in the account given by Irby and Mangles:—As they advanced down the ravine, in their approach to Petra, a wild and romantic view opened to them, terminated by the peaks of the black and rugged ridge of Mount Hor, the same that is alluded to in Scripture, and by a boundless extent of desert view, which they had hardly ever seen equalled for singularity and grandeur. The dark ridge of Mount Hor, which appears to be altogether composed of a sort of sparry flint, broken into masses and seamed with wide crevices, with scarcely any verdure to vary its deep purple color, forms the boundary of this hollow to the southward, and also to the westward, with that high peak upon which is the reputed tomb of Aaron, rearing itself above all the rest in the middle of the picture. This craggy ridge does not, however, terminate the landscape; the mountain from which they viewed it being considerably higher, and commanding a boundless view

beyond it, over a whitish expanse of country, which is varied here and there with other colored ridges, rising like islands upon it, or jutting forward into it like promontories.

“As we advanced,” say Irby and Mangles, “the natural features of the defile grew more and more imposing at every step, and the excavations and sculpture more frequent on both sides, till it presented, at last, a continued street of tombs, beyond which the rocks, gradually approaching each other, seemed all at once to close without any outlet. There is, however, one frightful chasm for the passage of the stream, which furnishes, as it did anciently, the only avenue to Petra on this side. It is impossible to conceive anything more awful or sublime than such an approach: the width is not more than just sufficient for the passage of two horsemen abreast; the sides are in all parts perpendicular, varying from four to seven hundred feet in height;” (Stephens says from five hundred to a thousand;) “they often overhang to such a degree, that, without their absolutely meeting, the sky is intercepted and completely shut out for one hun-

dred yards together, and there is little more light than in a cavern."

Passing the narrow and circuitous defile, which forms for two miles "a sort of subterraneous passage," it opens on the east, the way to the ruins of Petra. The rocks, or rather hills, then diverge on either side, and leave an oblong space where once stood the metropolis of Edom, where now lies a waste of ruins, encircled, save on the north-east alone, by stupendous cliffs. The minutest embellishments of a magnificent temple, entirely cut out of the rock, and now in ruins, are still wonderfully perfect. Along the borders of the cliffs, detached masses of rock, numerous and lofty, have been wrought into sepulchres, the interior of which is excavated into chambers, while the rock has been cut into the form of towers, with pilasters, and successive bands of frieze and entablature, wings, recesses, figures of animals, and columns.

It is difficult to form a just conception of "the vast necropolis of Petra." Tombs present themselves, not only in every avenue to the city, and upon every precipice that surrounds it, but even intermixed almost promiscuously with its public

and domestic edifices. Many of these consist of a single chamber, ten, fifteen, or twenty feet square, by ten or twelve in height, containing a recess in the wall large enough to receive one or a few deposits. Occasionally oblong pits or graves are sunk in the recesses or in the floor of the principal apartment. Some of these are of considerable depth, but they are mostly choked with stones and rubbish. In these tombs, which are for persons of inferior rank, there is commonly a small door, and an absence of all architectural decorations. Some, of larger dimensions, have several recesses, occupying two or three sides of the apartment, and probably intended for family tombs.

A vast number of excavations, enriched with various architectural ornaments, appear also,—the cemeteries of persons of a higher grade. Decoration is, however, confined to the front of the tombs; the interior is plain and unadorned. When the threshold is passed, perpendicular walls only meet the eye, on which the marks of the chisel may be traced, without a column or even a moulding.

An extraordinary effect is given to some of

these monuments by the rich and various colors of the rock of which they are formed; their substance being sandstone, of which red is the predominant hue.

Many of the rocks are said, indeed, to be adorned with such a profusion of the most lovely and brilliant colors, as to defy description. In the same mass appear red, purple, yellow, azure, or sky-blue, black, and white, either as distinct, in successive layers, or combined in every variety of shade and hue, yet all soft and brilliant as the tints of flowers, or the plumage of birds, or the sky over which the glories of the sun are cast as he sinks beneath the western hills.

No description can, therefore, do justice to the ruined capital of the Nabathæan Arabs in the land of Edom. Its name, which is traced to the Greek writers, probably gave rise to the kingdom and region being denominated Arabia Petræa. The word in Greek means a rock. The mention in the Old Testament of a stronghold, which belonged successively to the Amorites, the Edomites, and the Moabites, and bore the name of Selah, which in Hebrew has the same meaning, has given rise to the supposition that

the Selah of Edom was the Petra of the Nabathæans.

Strabo thus describes it:—"The metropolis of the Nabathæans is Petra; so called, for it lies in a place otherwise plain and level, but shut in by rock round about; but within having copious fountains for the supply of water and the irrigation of gardens. Beyond the enclosure the region is mostly a desert, especially towards Judea." Josephus frequently mentions it as the capital of Arabia Petræa.

It appears to have passed away with that kingdom under the sway of the Romans in the time of Trajan. After the sixth century, no notice is taken of Petra, even by the Arabian writers: the probability appears, therefore, to be that it was destroyed in some incursion—which has found no record—of the desert hordes, and that it was afterwards left unpeopled. Burckhardt was the first of our modern travellers who ventured to recognise in these ruins the ancient capital. We are indebted, however, for the most complete account to Laborde. Dr. Keith has shown the fulfilment of many remarkable

predictions, in his work on prophecy, in the article "Idumæa." Stephens has given a fine description of Petra.

CHAPTER IV.

SKETCH OF MOHAMMED—THE KORAN—THE CALIPHS—THE SARACENS—SPLENDOR OF BAGDAD—LITERATURE AND SCIENCE OF THE ARABS—DISSOLUTION OF THE SARACEN EMPIRE.

OF the internal history of Arabia in early times our knowledge is imperfect. All that has been transmitted to us by its writers, prior to the beginning of the third century of the Christian era, amounts only to some genealogies of kings, without any fixed chronology, and interspersed with but a few facts, the record of which is unsatisfactory. The Arabs then, like those of the present day, partly dwelt in cities, and partly as wandering tribes in movable encampments. The former class subsisted by agriculture and by different trades, especially by

commerce. To these, therefore, we purpose first to attend, leaving to a subsequent chapter a description of the wandering Arabs.

Mohammed was the descendant of a distinguished family, his own branch of which had fallen into poverty. He could produce many generations of pure and genuine nobility; he sprang from the tribe of Koreish, and the family of Hashem, the most illustrious of the Arabs, the princes of Mecca, and the hereditary guardians of Kaaba. The grandfather of Mohammed was Abdol Motaleb, the son of Hashem; a wealthy and generous citizen, who relieved the distress of famine with the supplies of commerce. Mecca, which had been fed by the liberality of the father, was saved by the courage of his son. The death of the parents of Mohammed in his infancy, followed soon after by that of his grandfather, devolved the charge of him upon his uncle, Abu Talet, by whom he was supported with affectionate liberality, the orphan's own property amounting to no more than five camels and an Ethiopian female slave. His uncle brought him up as a merchant, and in this

character he accompanied his kind relative into Syria at the age of thirteen.

In his twenty-fifth year he entered the service of Khadijah, a wealthy widow, whom he afterwards married; and, by a match so advantageous, rose to a level with the most affluent families in Mecca. It was under these auspicious circumstances that he projected his wretched system, and impiously pretended to inspiration. His wife was his first convert, who communicated the secret of his mission to her cousin Warakah Ebn Nawfal, a professed Christian, tolerably well versed in the Scriptures, who could write in the Hebrew character, and, either upon conviction or policy, embraced her opinion. Then followed proselytes of his own family, of whom his youthful pupil and cousin, Ali, was the first, and thus won to himself the distinction of *the first* of believers. The prophet was now in the fortieth year of his age, and still hesitated to become a public preacher of his system. He proceeded in its promulgation in privacy, and with the utmost caution, but afterwards began to frequent the public places of Mecca, and promulgated his doctrines with great eloquence and zeal.

No persuasions of his friends, nor dangers to be encountered, could now induce him to desist. He modified, indeed, his revelations according to circumstances, which introduced some contradictions into his Koran, but never abandoned, or for a moment lost sight of, his object. Opposed by the Koreish, and encouraged by new converts, some of them of considerable influence, he proceeded with what he assumed to be his mission, until its twelfth year, when he declared that he had been translated to heaven, and gave of his journey an absurdly fabulous account.

He was soon after compelled to flee from Mecca, his native city, to Yatreb, since called Medina, the first part of a phrase meaning "the town of the prophet," on account of the force and number of his opponents. The day of his flight, the 16th of July, 622, has become the era from which the Mohammedans count their years. Having hitherto acted on the defensive, he adopted the principle, not merely of supporting his system, but of propagating it by the sword. Battles were fought with various success, but upon the whole decidedly favorable to the impostor, who was now transformed into a general and a sove-

reign. When Mecca was conquered, and the tribes of Arabia joined in the profession, that "there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his apostle," the prophet commenced to spread Islamism over all countries. Strengthened by alliances, and zealous to proselyte by force of arms, many yielded to him: some paid tribute; others embraced the system; kings began to announce their adoption of the creed of a man whom they could not hope to oppose, and thus was Mohammed established. At the height of his power, however, death came; he expired at Medina, on the 8th of June, 632, in the sixty-third year of his age, a sensual, cruel man, and the greatest of impostors. Jo Smith, the Mormon prophet, is the modern Mohammed.

It is the common opinion, that Mohammed, assisted by a monk named Sergius, composed the Koran, which means "the reading," or "that which is read;" but his followers assert their belief that it was given him by God, through the ministry of the angel Gabriel. They affirm that it was communicated to Mohammed a verse at a time, and in different places, during the course of twenty-three years. The period thus men-

tioned is certainly very convenient, as it furnishes Mohammedans with an answer to those who tax them with the glaring contradictions and revolting absurdities of which the Koran is full. Mohammedans even venture to allege, that in the course of so long a time God repealed and altered several doctrines and precepts previously given; thus wickedly ascribing to Jehovah the confusion arising from the ignorance of Mohammed, and his wish to adapt his communications to circumstances constantly changing. The Koran, while Mohammed lived, was only kept in loose sheets; his successor collected them into a volume.

The Koran is the religious code of the Mohammedans. It is divided into one hundred and fourteen larger portions of a very unequal length, which we call chapters, but to which the Arabs apply another word—*sura* in the singular, and *sowar* in the plural. It is rarely used on any other occasion, and properly signifies a row, or a regular series, as a course of bricks in a building, or a rank of soldiers in an army. It is the same in use and meaning as the *sura* or *tora* of the Jews, who also apply to the fifty-three sec-

tions of the Pentateuch a name of the same signification. In the manuscript copies, these chapters are not distinguished by their numerical order, but by particular titles, which are taken sometimes from the peculiar subjects treated of, or the person mentioned therein, and generally from the first word of importance.

Every chapter is divided into smaller portions of very unequal length. Other devices have been adopted for the use of the readers of the Koran in the royal temples, or in the adjoining chapels, where the emperors and great men are interred. Thirty of these persons belong to every chapel; and as each reads a section every day, the whole is read over in the same space of time, as that number by one arrangement comprises the whole book.

The materials of the Koran are wholly borrowed from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, from the Talmudical legends and apocryphal gospels then current in the east, and from the traditions and fables that abounded in Arabia. The crude materials thus collected are here heaped together with perpetual and heedless repetition, without any visible connexion or even settled

principle. In an incoherent system, the Koran presents to view a religion of depravity, totally repugnant to the character of God, but therefore more likely to accord with the conceptions and appetites of a corrupt and sensual age.

The same day that Mohammed died, Abu-beker, the father of his favorite wife, chiefly by her influence, was elected Caliph, or "successor," in the regal and pontifical authority. Several revolts and insurrections now occurred, excited by apostates from Islamism and false prophets. These were quelled, and hostile expeditions were resumed. The day that Damascus was taken, Abu-beker died, and by his will appointed Omar his successor.

Various battles were now fought, the conquest of Syria and Palestine was completed, and Amru, one of the chiefs of the army, was sent to besiege Alexandria. He took it by assault after a siege of fourteen months, and a great loss of men. He sealed up everything curious and valuable in the city, till the caliph should direct what was to be done. Among the treasures thus possessed was the far-famed library of Alexandria, formed and maintained by the first

Ptolemy, king of Egypt, and his successors. It is said to have amounted to 700,000 volumes. It is, however, to be recollected, that the rolls spoken of contained far less than a printed volume. The *Metamorphoses* of Ovid in fifteen books, for instance, in this way would make fifteen volumes; and, according to the same computation, Athenæus says, that Didymus wrote no fewer than 3500 volumes.

Omar directed that all the valuable goods at Alexandria should be sold to defray the expenses of the war; but added, that if the books found in the library were agreeable to the Koran, they were superfluous; if contrary to it they were pernicious; and therefore in either case they should all be destroyed! Accordingly Amru distributed the books among the 4000 warm baths of the city, which they supplied with fuel for six months.

Omar was stabbed by a slave in the mosque at Medina. In the course of a short reign, he had erected a most powerful and formidable empire. The number of towns, fortresses, and castles which he took is fearful; and while Alexander the Great dared not meddle with the

religion of conquered nations, Omar is said to have destroyed four thousand temples and churches of idolaters, Magians, and Christians. But "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

Othman and Ali succeeded to the power of Omar, the latter being the most illustrious of Mohammed's companions. He was valiant, generous, and eloquent. The following sayings of his are worthy of notice:—

One of the officers having once insolently asked him, "Why the reigns of Abu-beker and Omar were so tranquil, and the reigns of Othman and Ali were so turbulent?" with great readiness he answered, "Because Abu-beker and Omar were served by Othman and me; and Othman and I by you, and such as you."

The following decision is creditable to his ingenuity:—Two travellers sat down to dine; the one had five loaves, the other three. A stranger passing by, asked leave to eat with them, and they hospitably agreed thereto. After dinner, the stranger laid down eight pieces of money for his fare, and departed. The owner of the five loaves took up five pieces, and left three for the

other, who insisted upon getting half. The case was brought before Ali for his decision, and he gave the following judgment:—"Let the owner of the five loaves take seven pieces of money, and the other but one." And this was the exact proportion of what each furnished for the stranger's entertainment; for, dividing each loaf into three shares, the eight loaves gave twenty-four shares; and as they all fared alike, each person's proportion was a third of the whole, or eight shares. The stranger, therefore, ate seven shares of the five loaves, and only one share of the three loaves; and so the caliph divided the money between the owners.

The real freedom and independence produced by religion were well expressed by him in the following saying:—"Whosoever is desirous to be rich without goods, powerful without subjects, and a subject without a master, has only to quit the dominion of sin, and to serve God, and he will find these three things."

The people whose history we are thus briefly tracing are called Saracens, a name derived from the word *Shark*, the East, from whence also we have the term "sirocco," the east wind. The

name of Saracens came into use, in a vague and undefined sense, after the Roman conquest of Palestine, but it does not seem to have been employed as a general designation till about the eighth century. It soon acquired a fearful import, for the enthusiasm of the followers of Mohammed kindled all their energies; they poured forth as locusts upon all surrounding countries; nor did they rest till they had overrun one half of the whole world. On the east they invaded and subdued Syria, Persia, northern India even to Oxus, where their characteristics still remain. On the north, they rushed through Asia Minor, crossed the Dardanelles, and laid siege to Constantinople, which was then the capital of the Greek empire. In the west, they subdued Egypt, and all Northern Africa, to the Straits of Gibraltar, crossed there, founded a kingdom in Spain, and planted their banners even on the mountains of Switzerland and the frontiers of France.

Various possessors of authority and power appeared till the time of Moawiyah II., who, finding himself unequal to the burden they imposed, voluntarily abdicated his office.

Soon after, the empire was split into two powerful factions, one espousing the house of Omiah in Syria, the other the house of Ali in Arabia. The Syrian caliph was Abd'almalec, who was more powerful than any of his predecessors, and his son and successor extended his dominions. One of his governors, Hejai, was remarkable for his great cruelty, but circumstances are related of him of a different character.

One day, when he was hunting and alone, grown thirsty with the chase, he civilly asked an Arab, who was feeding his camels in a lonely spot, to give him a little water to drink. The Arab, without returning his salute, said roughly, "Alight, and help yourself, for I am neither your companion nor servant." He did so, and when he had drank, he asked, "Whom do you count the best of all men?"—"The prophet of God," said the Arab. "What think you of Ali?"—"His excellency," said he, "is inexpressible." "What think you of Abd'almalec?" The Arab paused, but being pressed for an answer, intimated that he was a bad prince. "Why so?" said Al Hejai. "Because he has sent us the most wicked governor under the

heavens." The Arab then, looking steadfastly at Al Hejai, who was finely dressed, asked, "Who are you?" Not choosing to acknowledge himself, he answered, "Why do you ask?"—"Because," said he, "this bird passing over our heads, by her croaking, tells me you are the chief of the company approaching." His attendants then came up, and by order of the governor took with them the poor Arab.—Next day he was brought to Al Hejai's table, who desired him to eat. The Arab then said his usual grace, "God grant that the end of this meal may be as fortunate as the beginning!" After dinner, the governor asked, "Do you remember the discourse we held yesterday?" The Arab answered, "God prosper you in everything! What passed yesterday is a secret not to be divulged to-day."—"But I will divulge it," replied Al Hejai. "Take your choice, then, whether you will stay with me as my servant, or be sent to the caliph, with a report of what you have said." He instantly replied, "There is a third course, better than either of these." "What is that?"—"Send me home, and never let us see each other any more!" Not a little pleased at the poor man's

spirit and readiness, the governor dismissed him with a present of ten thousand dirhems.

Haroun al Raschid, or "the just," was one of the most celebrated princes of the house of Abbas. It is related, says Mr. Lane, that, at a grand fête which he was giving, he ordered the poet Abu-l-Atâhujeh to depict in verse the voluptuous enjoyments of his sovereign. The poet began thus:—

"Live long in safe enjoyment of thy desires, under shadow of lofty palaces!"

"Well said!" exclaimed Al Raschid; "and what next?"

"May thy wishes be abundantly fulfilled, whether at eventide or in the morning!"

"Well again!" said the caliph; "then what next?"

"But when the rattling breath struggles in the dark cavity of the chest,

Then shalt thou know surely that thou hast been only in the midst of illusions."

Al Raschid wept; and Fadl, the son of Yatya, said, "The Prince of the Faithful sent for thee to divert him, and thou hast plunged him into grief."—"Suffer him," said the prince, "for he

hath beheld us in blindness, and it displeased him to increase it."

His generosity bordered on extravagance. One day, having received a remittance of 30,000 pieces of gold, from the revenues of one of the provinces, he went on horseback to view the treasure; and observing his courtiers cast longing eyes on the gold, he disposed of no less than 24,000 pieces among his friends before he took his foot out of the stirrup to alight.

One day, a woman claiming redress for damages done by his troops to her house and lands, he told her in the language of the Koran, that, "when princes go to war, the people must suffer from the soldiers."—"Yes," said she, "but the Koran also declares, that 'the habitations of those princes who authorize injustice shall be made desolate.'" He instantly ordered her ample reparation

During this period of splendor, we may infer that literature flourished among the Arabs, particularly in the early part of the ninth century. Professors of Christianity, but distinguished for their learning, had increased at Bagdad, and now they were encouraged freely to unlock their

treasures. The court wore the appearance of a college, rather than of a luxurious and warlike government, and all classes were invited to share the benefits that were accessible. When Al Mamoun was remonstrated with on appointing a learned Christian to an office of influence over the mental efforts of his people, he replied, "I chose this learned man, not to be my guide in religious affairs, but to be my teacher of science; and it is well known that the wisest men are to be found among the Jews and Christians." A striking proof of the value he placed on literature.

A whimsical story is told of a king, says Mr. Lane, who denied to poets those rewards to which usage had almost given them a claim. This king, whose name is not recorded, had the faculty of retaining in his memory an ode after having only once heard it, and had a Memlook who could repeat an ode which he had twice heard, and a female slave who could repeat one that she had heard thrice. Whenever a poet came to compliment him with a panegyrical ode, the king used to promise him, that, if he found his verses to be his original composition, he would give him a sum of money equal in weight to what they

were written upon. The poet consenting, would recite the ode; and the king would say, "It is not new, for I have known it some years;" and would repeat it as he had heard it: after which he would add, "And this Memlook also retains it in his memory;" and would order the Memlook to repeat it, which having heard twice, from the poet and the king, he would do. The king would then say to the poet, "I have also a female slave who can repeat it;" and ordering her to do so stationed behind the curtains, she would repeat what she had thus heard thrice, so that the poet would go away empty-handed.

The famous poet, El Asmaee, having heard of this proceeding, and guessed the trick, determined upon outwitting the king, and accordingly composed an ode made up of very difficult words. But this was not his only preparative measure; another will be presently explained; and the third was to assume the dress of a Bedouin, that he might not be known, covering his face, the eyes only excepted, with a litham (a piece of drapery), in accordance with a custom of the Arabs of the desert. Thus disguised, he went to the palace, and having asked permission, en-

tered, and saluted the king, who said to him, "Whence art thou, O brother of the Arabs? What dost thou desire?" The poet answered, "May God increase the power of the king! I am a poet of such a tribe, and have composed an ode in praise of our lord the Sultan."—"O, brother of the Arabs," said the king, "hast thou heard of our condition?"—"What is it, O king of the age?" asked the poet.—"It is," replied the king, "that, if the ode be not thine, we give thee no reward; and if it be thine, we give thee the weight in money of what it is written upon." "How," said El Asmaee, "should I assume to myself that which belongs to another, and knowing, too, that lying before kings is one of the basest of actions? But I agree to this condition." So he repeated his ode. The king, perplexed and unable to remember any of it, made a sign to the Memlook, but he had retained nothing; and called to the female slave, but she also was unable to repeat a word. "O brother of the Arabs," said he, "thou hast spoken truth, and the ode is thine without doubt; I have never heard it before; produce, therefore, what it is written upon, and we will give thee

its weight in money, as we have promised.”—“Wilt thou,” said the poet, “send one of the attendants to carry it?”—“To carry what?” asked the king; “is it not upon a paper here in thy possession?”—“No,” replied the poet; “at the same time I composed it I could not procure a piece of paper upon which to write it; I could find nothing but a fragment of a marble column left by my father; so I engraved upon it this; and it lies in the court of the palace.” He had brought it wrapped up, on the back of a camel. The king, to fulfil his promise, was obliged to exhaust his treasury; and, to prevent a repetition of this trick (of which he afterwards discovered El Asmaee to have been the author), in future rewarded the poets according to the usual custom of kings.

“The Thousand and One Nights,” usually called the “Arabian Nights Entertainments,” are well known. Doubts have been entertained as to whether they are an original or a translated work, but the preciseness of their descriptions of Arabian life and manners in towns, is generally admitted. “Antar,” so called after its hero, is a work of great celebrity in the east: it

exhibits an interesting picture of the condition of Arabia shortly before the appearance of Mohammed, particularly of the wandering tribes. It is traced to a writer named Asmai.

History, though neglected by the ancient Arabs, was cultivated by those of after times. Annals, chronicles, and memoirs, were greatly multiplied. Some contain much that is fanciful, but others are as remarkable for their accuracy as their extent. A history of Spain is said to have occupied six authors in succession, during one hundred and fifteen years. Almost every subject appears at one period or other to have received the attention of Arabian writers.

To the science of the Arabs we have been, and are still, greatly indebted. They are the medium through which we received numerical characters, as well as algebra and trigonometry. They appear to have derived their knowledge of these subjects from the Hindoos; but it was by means of an Arab treatise that algebra was introduced into Europe. A complete and able translation of this work, by Dr. Rosen, was published, with the original Arabic, in 1831.

In the early part of the ninth century, the

remote provinces of the west, in Africa and Spain, grew independent of the reigning caliph. Other revolts occurred at subsequent periods. Thus the great and unwieldy empire, so rapidly formed, as rapidly decayed. "Every tree," said our Lord, "which my Father has not planted, shall be rooted up." The time arrived, therefore, for the overthrow of the Saracen power. For three hundred years it retained only the shadow of sovereignty, beyond Bagdad and its dependencies, until its final dissolution by the Mogul Tartars.

Now the Tigris is the eastern limit of the race. From the north they have passed back through Asia Minor; and a line stretched from the north-east corner of the Mediterranean to the Tigris bounds their wanderings in that direction. In Spain, there is little left of them except a few traces of their language, and a mixture of their blood. In Africa, they still exist as a numerous and powerful people, and occupy all the north of it, from the extreme east to the extreme west, a greater distance than from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores of our own continent. In Syria,

though there is a mixture of races, there is but one language, and that is the Arabic.

To see the Arab as he appears in towns, we must go to Cairo, one of the best-built cities of the east. Its streets, however, are narrow and often crooked; and the houses sometimes jut over them on each side, so as almost to meet above. Yet, as they are traversed, every step in them, or around the walls, brings the traveller into contact with ruined buildings, or the confused remains of the ancient city. Its original name in Arabic was El Kâhirah; but it is now universally called Musr, as were the former capitals of Egypt. The population is estimated at about 250,000 souls.

Moslems of Arabian origin have for many centuries mainly composed the population of Egypt. They have changed its language, laws, and general manners, and made the metropolis the principal seat of Arabian learning and arts. Musr must therefore be regarded as the first Arab city of our age, and in no other place can so complete a knowledge be obtained of the most civilized classes of the Arabs. It appears that Moslem Egyptians compose nearly four-fifths of the

population of the metropolis, and seven-eighths of that of all Egypt.

These people have descended from various tribes of families which have settled in Egypt at different periods; but, by intermarriage with Copts and others who have become proselytes to the Mohammedan faith, as well as by a change of life, from a state of wandering to that of citizens or agriculturists, they have, as Mr. Lane shows, become so much altered, that there is a strongly marked difference between them and the natives of Arabia. Yet they must be regarded as not less genuine Arabs than the dwellers in the desert.

In general, they attain the height of about five feet eight or nine inches. Most of them are remarkably well proportioned. Those who have not been much exposed to the sun have a yellowish, but very clear complexion, and soft skin; the rest are of a considerably darker and coarser complexion. A remarkable characteristic of the Egyptian women is their upright carriage and gait. It is most observable in the peasantry, owing doubtless, in a great measure, to the habit of the women of bearing heavy earthen

water-vessels. and other burdens upon the head.

Their devotion to their prophet is great, and they are generally much more affected in visiting his tomb, than in performing any other rite. In ordinary conversation they frequently allude to him, and implore his intercession. Some will not do anything that the prophet is not recorded to have done; and they particularly abstain from anything he did not eat, though its lawfulness is undoubted. - One person in authority forbade a woman, who questioned him as to the propriety of the act, to spin by the light of torches passing in the street by night, which were not her own property, because the prophet had not mentioned that it was lawful to do so, and was not known to have availed himself of a person's light without his leave.

They pay high honor to the Koran, generally taking care never to hold it, or suspend it in a such a manner that it shall fall too low. They deposit it on a high and clean place, and never put anything, not even a book, on the top of it. On quoting from it, they usually say, "He whose name be exalted," or "God, whose name be ex-

alted, hath said, in the excellent Book,"—a course which may well excite the shame of professing Christians, for their disregard of the only volume given by inspiration of God.

Motives of policy or courtesy may lead to the expression of liberal sentiments, but commonly there is a great display of pride. The Moslems consider persons of any other faith as children of perdition, and in doing so follow the saying of the Koran, "O ye who have become believers, take not the Jews or Christians for your friends: they are friends one to another; but whosoever of you taketh them for his friends, he surely is one of them."

Like some other people of the east, they are very hospitable. A word which signifies "a person on a journey" is most commonly employed in the sense of a visitor or guest. Very few persons would think of sitting down to a meal, were there a stranger in the house, without inviting him to partake of it: should he be a menial, he would be invited to eat with the servants. Persons of the middle classes, if living in a retired situation, sometimes take their supper before the door of the house, and invite any

passenger of respectable appearance to share it with them.

Mr. Lane describes the temperance and moderation of the people, with regard to diet, as exemplary. They show a great respect for bread; the name they give it literally signifies life, and they guard against wasting the smallest portion.

The highest and middle orders are scrupulously cleanly, and those of the lower rank are more so than in most other countries. Ablutions are enjoined upon them by their religious system. Conducive as they are to health in a hot climate, it would be well did they attend to the cleanliness of their offspring, but these are usually left in a dirty state.

Indolence is generally prevalent; and labor is encountered only when imperatively necessary. This is partly to be traced to the heat of the climate, and the fertility of the soil. The boatmen, porters, and other laborers often endure extreme fatigue; but mechanics, though greedy of gain, consume far more time in their work than it requires, and may be easily induced to leave it, however lucrative, for unprofitable trifles.

Depravity abounds among the Moslems in all

its fearful forms; and as we glance at them, while shocked at the variety and extent of evil, we long to waft to them the glad tidings of salvation.

“The cross, once seen, is death to every vice;
Else He that hung there suffer’d all his pain,
Bled, groan’d, and agonized, and died in vain.”



CHAPTER V

PROPHECY IN REFERENCE TO ISHMAEL—ITS MEMORABLE
FULFILMENT—OBJECTIONS OF GIBBON—THEIR REFUTA-
TION.

IN looking now at the dwellers in the desert, we are reminded of an affecting narrative in the inspired volume. Hagar, the Egyptian maid of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was driven by the conduct of her mistress into the wilderness. But the angel of the Lord appeared to the fugitive, and said, “Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against

every man, and every man's hand will be against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"—Gen. xvi. 11–13.

A few additional circumstances are supplied to this prediction by another passage: "And Abraham said unto God, Oh that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time next in the year."—Gen. xvii. 18–21.

Of Ishmael it was also stated, "He will be a wild man." The word employed is very emphatic; it is that used to describe the wild ass, to which a reference has already been made.

Ishmael was a stranger to his father's house. Early was he inured to hardships. As his body grew robust, his mind doubtless became energetic and even fierce from these circumstances. And as the wild ass is remarkable for its savage disposition and prodigious swiftness, and its dwelling in the wilderness, so are the descendants of Ishmael. Their father was an archer, and, like him, in the use of bows and arrows they have always been dexterous and successful.

Another declaration in reference to Ishmael is equally remarkable: "I will make of him a great nation;" and, consequently, there was a rapid increase of his immediate descendants. Isaac, though the child of promise, with whom was continued the covenant of redemption, and in whom centred the designs of the God of love towards our fallen and guilty race, had only two sons, Jacob and Esau. Of these the last was rejected, and the line of the Messiah—the anointed of the Lord—the almighty and gracious Saviour of man, was confined to the younger branch of that family. One hundred and sixty-nine years after the period in which the prediction was delivered, Jacob had only twelve sons,

while the children of Ishmael were so greatly augmented in number, as to become a trading nation. We have evidence of this when the eleven patriarchs were plotting the destruction of their brother Joseph, for then it is said, "Behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt."—Gen. xxxvii. 25.

It was declared, moreover, that Ishmael should "beget twelve princes." And when Moses enumerates the individual descendants of the patriarch by name, he thus concludes his account: "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations."—Gen. xxv. 16.

Nebaioth is called by the Arabs the first-born son of Ishmael, and the prince or sheikh of one of the twelve Ishmaelitish tribes, which, as well as the territory they occupied, continued to bear his name in after times. Mahalath, one of Esau's wives, is expressly called the sister of Nebaioth, and the land of Esau or Edom was ultimately possessed by the descendants of Ne-

baioth. They appear to have lived for ages as shepherds.

On the conquest of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, the Edomites made themselves masters of a great part of the south of Palestine, while, either then or at a later period, they themselves were supplanted in the southern parts of their own territory by a people called, both by the Greek and Roman writers, by a name which is clearly traceable to the Nebaioth of the Hebrews. Not that they consisted only of his descendants, to the exclusion of other Ishmaelites: the Arabs are frequently described in Scripture as "a mingled people;" and it cannot be doubted that the Nebathæans included a variety of Arab races, who took their common name from the progenitor of the largest or most influential tribe, Nebaioth, the first-born of Ishmael.

While the greater number of the Nebathæans followed the occupation of shepherds, others applied themselves to commerce. In the history of ancient commerce, Arabia appears of importance, not only on account of the export of its own productions, but also as an intermediate station in the trade with India. Hero-

dotus calls Arabia the only country where frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and laudanum are to be found. Gold and precious stones are also often alluded to by the ancients as indigenous productions of Arabia Felix. And though the real productions of the country may be sometimes confounded with articles that were foreign, the early trade of the Phœnicians with India must have been carried on to a great extent through Arabia.

It was said of Ishmael, "his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him;" and we feel that when the first clause of the sentence is true, the last is inevitable. Society is held together by mutual obligations; and the enmity of one class produces and sustains it in others to which it is opposed. The Arabs have long retained the character of an independent people. They have successfully resisted in every age the armies that invaded them, nor have their necks ever been galled by any yoke of submission. When the ancient historian describes the glory of Sesostris, the most renowned of the sovereigns of Egypt, and the extent of his conquests, he is compelled to acknowledge

that the Arabs were formidable to him. So far from crouching before his armies, which in other quarters had been deemed resistless, they presented a front which seemed to scowl defiance on his power. Though in the pride of dominion he had yoked kings to his chariot, as so many beasts of burden, whenever he entered the city or the temple, he was compelled to build a wall along the coast of Egypt from Heliopolis to Pelusium, to guard himself against the Arabs and the Syrians—his impetuous neighbors. The Assyrians, the Persians, and the Medes were generally on friendly terms with the Arabs; but they frequently obtained by courtesy that which they could not have hoped to gain by violence from a people they found to be invincible. When Cambyses turned his arms against Egypt, he was first compelled to ask permission of the Arabs to pass through their dominions, and on them, as a free and independent people, even Cyrus could not impose conditions.

There was, however, one conqueror on whose purposes it becomes us more fully to dwell. The ambition of Alexander was proverbially great, and it is said that when he had subdued the

whole known world, he wept that he had not other worlds to conquer. Nations were crushed under him, others sent embassies of submission to his authority, and the barbarous and the civilized alike desired the shadow of his protection. But the descendants of Ishmael were a solitary exception to the general subserviency. In the independence and haughtiness of their spirits, they gazed on his dominion with undisturbed self-confidence, alike disdaining to court his favor or conciliate his affection: they even dared to reject his friendship and despise his menaces.

Alexander was mortified at their proud defiance, and determined to chastise their presumption. He raised an immense force by land and sea, and thought only of signal and certain vengeance. But the word of God had gone forth—that word which shall not fail in one jot or one tittle, though the heavens and the earth pass away. The prophecy as to the descendants of Ishmael was to be fulfilled, though all the powers of the world were arrayed against them. And so it was: Alexander was cut off in the flower of his age, before he could consummate his purposes; the Arabs were delivered from all the

toils he was attempting to throw around them; and the truth of Jehovah appeared, like himself, immutable and eternal.

Nothing was now attempted against their liberties, until they were threatened by Antigonus. He advanced with all the pomp and pageantry of war; but, so far from enjoying a triumph, the Arabs chased his soldiers from their territories.

When the sceptre of the world passed into the hands of imperial Rome, they did not bend to its sway. At different periods, several illustrious generals aimed to make a tract of country, hitherto so stubborn and unyielding, a Roman province, but it was only to reap inevitable failure. A few tribes, indeed, were subdued by Pompey in the time of the Republic, and by Ælius Gallius in the reign of Augustus, but the impression they made on the country was inconsiderable. Their conquest was incomplete, their assault was not general, neither was the tract occupied by them considerable, nor their influence permanent. Trajan and Severus attacked the Arabs; but though the former was more successful than the latter, it has been shown,

after the most careful and enlarged researches, that he never was master of Arabia Petræa, much less of Arabia Felix, "notwithstanding the mean adulation of his coins, orators, and historians."

One opponent of the facts now adduced must not be overlooked. The historian of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," has had his full meed of praise. But whatever may be the credit due to Gibbon for his diligent research, or for the charms of his style, his infidelity is beyond dispute. It sometimes appears clearly on the surface of his pages, and when it does not, we may often detect "the trail of the serpent." It can excite no surprise then that he should thus write:—

"The perpetual independence of the Arabs has been the theme of praise among strangers and natives: and the arts of controversy transform this singular event into a prophecy and a miracle in favor of the posterity of Ishmael. Some exceptions that can neither be dissembled nor eluded render this mode of reasoning as indiscreet as it is superfluous: the kingdom of Yemen has been successively subdued by the Abyssinians, the Persians, the Sultans of Egypt,

and the Turks: the holy cities of Mecca and Medina have repeatedly bowed under a Scythian tyrant; and the Roman province of Arabia embraced the peculiar wilderness in which Ishmael and his sons must have pitched their tents in the face of their brethren."

But a reply has already been anticipated in what has been advanced. We have adduced the testimony of the best writers of history, and we oppose the declarations of men who had no bias in favor of the word of God to those of one who wrote—infatuated man—with the strongest bias against it; and we claim the credit of a refutation most decisive and complete.

There is, however, one addition which we cannot refrain from making: it shows at once the immutability of truth, and the inconsistency of error. It is from the pen of Gibbon himself; it is from the very page just quoted, and without the intervention of a single sentence. Let the reader mark and weigh well the refutation of his infidel statements under his own hand. He has asserted, be it observed, that there have been some exceptions to the independence of the Arabs, and consequently that the prophecy and

the miracle in favor of the descendants of Ishmael are to be traced to the "arts of controversy;" but he adds, "Yet these exceptions are *temporary or local*; the body of the nation has escaped the yoke of the most powerful monarchies; the arms of Sesostris and Cyrus, of Pompey and Trajan, could never achieve the conquest of Arabia; the present sovereign of the Turks may exercise a shadow of jurisdiction, but his pride is reduced to solicit the friendship of a people whom it is dangerous to provoke, and fruitless to attack." In a note, Gibbon further acknowledges that "the real possessions, and some naval inroads of Trajan, are *magnified* by history and medals into the Roman conquest of Arabia."

Any addition to these admissions is unnecessary; the prophecy in reference to Ishmael has been fulfilled. The surrounding countries of Egypt, Syria, and Persia have once and again changed their rulers and their race, but Arabia has ever continued the same. The march of conquest has continued around her, but it has never penetrated her wild fastnesses. Well has it been remarked, "She has retained her iden-

tity—an oasis of freedom amidst a desert of slaves.”

It has been said, with great truth and beauty, in Collyer's work on prophecy, “In entering the temple of Revelation, one of the first objects which has attracted the attention of all ages, and which constitutes a grand support, is the pillar of prophecy. Like the celebrated obelisks of Egypt, it is covered with hieroglyphics, which the wisdom of man, and the skill of science, in their combined efforts, long attempted in vain to decipher. There is one interpreter whose elucidations never fail to render the inscription intelligible. It is Time. His hand retraces all the figures before the eyes of succeeding generations; his interpretation is recorded by the pen of faithful and impartial history; and by comparing the commentary with the original, we are able to comprehend both the one and the other. This pillar is adamant, and resists the impressions of age. Its inscriptions were written by hands which have long since mouldered into dust, and by persons who did not themselves always understand what they wrote, nor were able to explain the characters which they formed; but

the substance of them was dictated by God himself, and the column is his own workmanship. There have been many fruitless efforts made to shake this monument of infinite wisdom, and to erase these lines of unsearchable knowledge; but the pillar remains unmoved, the lines unimpaired, and the whole uninjured either by malice or by years. The parts of this singular elevation which stand nearer the roof of the temple are covered by an impenetrable cloud. The whole pillar was once equally involved; but Time, who has rolled away the mist from its base, shall, at the destined period, unveil the remaining part of it; and while we shall be able to read the writing, he shall announce, with unerring perspicuity, the interpretation."

The mist has most certainly been chased from the part of the column bearing upon it the prophecy in reference to Ishmael. The Bedouins pride themselves in being as free as the wind in all their movements over the desert. They roam about like the shifting sands, scorning to submit to the government of the neighboring nations. Small tribes or fragments of tribes may be an exception to this remark, but it holds

good of the mass. Their black tents may be seen scattered here and there over the hills of Mount Lebanon, and tenanted by those who bear the name of some of the great tribes of the desert, from whom they have been separated by domestic feuds. But even these broken hordes, though living thus, will not brook oppression. They detest the Turk and hate the Russian; and on the least attempt to curb them, they fly to the desert, and luxuriate in poverty and freedom.

The traveller is struck to this day with the unalterable character of Ishmaelitic manners. It is, for instance, nearly sunset, and he is in the midst of an Arab encampment. Sheep, asses, and cattle approach it from afar, under the guardianship of young boys, and the maidens go forth to milk. Meanwhile the more aged females prepare the evening meal, consisting of heaps of rice, having butter thinly poured upon them, piled upon circular wooden dishes; while the young and old men are prostrate on the floor, pouring forth their prayers, with their unsheathed swords lying before them. With the murmur of their petitions, the bellowing of camels, the braying of asses, the bleating of sheep and

goats, and the deep bark of the shepherd dog are mingled.

The traveller now approaches ; a female goes forth to him ; he asks for water, and what is the reply ? “ O stranger ! our encampment affords no water, but milk we freely offer to you.” She immediately returns to the tent, and though it may deprive her own family of the evening meal, she again appears, and gracefully presents the bowl to the traveller. He drinks, and with the usual and appropriate phrase, “ May safety be with you ! ” he returns the vessel and resumes his journey. How little aid from fancy is required in such circumstances to transport the mind to the days of the patriarchs, when Ishmael roamed over the same spot, or when the tents of Judah were spread about these plains, and Moses tended the flocks of Jethro !

Could we listen to their language, examine their garments, partake of their food, enter their tents, attend the ceremonies of their marriage feasts, and present ourselves before the chief, we should find that still all is the same. The aged men sit in dignity ; at the wells the people water their flocks ; they are found at the door of the tent in

the cool of the day; they place the calf which they have dressed before the stranger; they move onward to some distant place, and pitch their tent near richer pasturage; and all the treasures they possess are in camels, kine, sheep and goats, men-servants and women-servants, and changes of raiment. "As we look on," says a traveller, "we are almost ready to ask if such an one be not Abraham, or Lot, or Jacob, or Job, or Bildad the Shuhite, or Rebekah, or Rachael, or the daughter of Jethro the Midianite; we seem to know them all. The mountains, and valleys, and streams partake of the same unchangeableness; not a stone has been removed, not a barrier has been raised, not a tree has been planted, not a village has been called together. Could Ishmael come again to the earth, he would recognise without effort his own people and his own land."

CHAPTER VI.

PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF THE BEDOUINS—THEIR MANNERS
AND CUSTOMS—THEIR DEFICIENCY IN MECHANICAL ARTS—
THEIR LOVE OF MUSIC—THEIR PLUNDER.

THE Arabs are of the middle size, lean, and athletic. Their eyes and hair are dark, and their complexion is brown. In youth the countenance is generally mild but expressive; in advanced age, the aspect is truly venerable.

Their persons are extremely well formed; they are not so slight as some travellers have represented them, and their features are good. Their deep-set eyes sparkle from under their bushy eye-brows with extraordinary vivacity.

Living as the Arabs do, in the open air, their senses are remarkably acute. They can descry distant objects in their vast plains, which could not be discovered by less practised eyes. Sounds are also caught with surprising facility and certainty. Captain Newland mentions an instance of a ship, which, after firing the morning gun,

ran 96 miles by the log; and when the pilot came on board in the evening, he declared he had heard the signal at sun-rise, on the faith of which he had put off with his boat. Nor is this a solitary fact; others equally surprising may be told of Arabs who act as pilots in the Red Sea. The sense of smell is also extremely nice, and hence their dislike to houses and towns.

Another singular power of the Arab is that of telling by the foot-prints on the sand whether they were made by one of his own, or of a neighboring tribe. He also knows whether the person passed on that day or several days before, and whether he carried a load or not, by the faintness or depth of the impression. Should he be in pursuit, and find the track of the person sought, he judges by the intervals between the steps whether he is fatigued or not, and consequently of the likelihood of overtaking him. He is equally sagacious as to the feet of camels, and his tact is extremely useful in recovering those that have been stolen or have strayed, as well as in the pursuit of fugitives.

A camel can be tracked by a Bedouin shepherd even in a sandy valley, where thousands

of other footsteps cross the road in all directions; and sometimes he can tell the name of every one that has passed in the course of a morning. Many transactions, which would otherwise be secret, are brought to light by the singular power which the Arabs have; an offender can scarcely hope to escape detection.

The title of Sheikh* is the most ancient and common in use among the grandees of Arabia, but the Sheriffs, being the descendants of Mohammed, hold the first rank, a dignity which shows the singular veneration in which the family of the impostor is held. The Sheriffs are multiplied over all Mohammedan countries; and though they are frequently found in the lowest state of misery, their character is held sacred, and their presence commands universal respect. The dignity thus possessed is hereditary, both by male and female descent.

Arabia is, and has been from the earliest ages, ruled by a number of princes and petty lords, independent of each other, and exercising within their own territory a sort of supreme indepen-

* Pronounced *shahi*.

dent power, founded on patriarchal principles. The sway of the father of a family,—the first source of subordination among men, is that of which the influence is most strongly felt among the Arabs. Each little community is considered as a family, the head of which exercises paternal authority over the rest. These, in the course of a succession of migrations, are split into several branches, that still form one tribe, without being dependent on each other; but their genealogies are carefully counted, and the representative of the senior branch is always regarded with a high degree of respect and deference. The republican form, which originated in the bosom of cities, has never been known or even attempted in Arabia; but a certain kind of confederation is made by the election of a great sheikh, or “sheikh of sheikhs,” who holds supremacy. This dignity belongs to a certain family, but out of this family the selection is made by the inferior sheikhs, from general favor, or an idea of merit. This sway, however, can never be said to assume a feudal aspect, or enable him to summon the other chiefs as vassals. Each intrenched in his rocky castle, or roaming with

his camels and flocks over the expanses of the desert, holds himself independent of every other human power.

The tent is the cherished home of the larger proportion of the people, and when they remove, their dwellings are transported with them. Their height is generally seven feet, the length from twenty-five to thirty, and the breadth about ten. A tent is divided into two apartments, one for the men and the other for the women, by a white woollen carpet of Damascus manufacture, which is drawn across, and fastened to the three middle posts.

The furniture comprises pack-saddles, as well as others for riding, water-bags made of tanned camel-skins, goat-skins for milk and butter, a little bag into which may be put the hair or wool which falls from the sheep and camels on the road, a leathern bucket for drawing up water from deep wells, a hand-mill, a mortar, a coffee-pot, a copper pan, wooden dishes, the horses' feeding-bag, and the iron chain to fasten their fore-feet while pasturing about the camp.

A camp varies according to circumstances. If the tents are many, they extend in a straight

line, in rows three or four deep; if few, they are pitched in a circle. The dwelling of the sheikh is always on the side where travellers are expected whom he has to receive, or where danger is apprehended which it is his duty to oppose. He strikes his lance into the ground in front of his tent, and ties to it his horse or camel, while the couch on which he and his guests recline is formed of pack-saddles. Wandering in search of water, the Arabs move in parties slowly over the sandy plain. Those who are armed ride foremost to reconnoitre; the flocks, with their young, follow; and behind come the beasts of burden, laden with the women and children, the tents, baggage, and provision.

The common dress of the Bedouins is very simple, consisting of a coarse cotton shirt, over which is worn a thin, light, white woollen mantle, or sometimes one of a coarser kind, striped with white and brown. The wealthy wear, instead of this, a long gown of silk or cotton stuff. The mantles worn by the sheikhs are interwoven with gold, and may be valued at ten pounds sterling. The head-dress varies greatly, and is often expensive. Sometimes several caps are worn: these

are made of linen, cotton, or thick cloth. They are used when an Arab wishes to be very gay ; and then the one that covers the whole is richly embroidered with gold, and inwrought with texts and passages from the Koran. Over all these is wrapped a sash or large piece of muslin, with the ends ornamented with silk or gold fringes hanging down. This encumbrance is considered a mark of respect towards superiors. Niebuhr has shown forty-eight different ways of wearing the head-dress. The Bedouins use a square kerchief of yellow or green cotton, with two corners hanging down on each side, to protect them from the sun and wind, or to conceal their features when they wish to be unknown. In winter, the Bedouins throw over the shirt a pelisse made of sheep-skins stitched together. As, too, thick clothing is found a defence from heat as well as cold, such a covering is sometimes worn in summer.

The importance attached by a chief, though almost without clothing, to his position, will appear from the statement of a modern traveller. “ ‘You wished,’ said the sheikh, ‘to see the country of the Bedouins: *this*,’ he continued, striking his

spear firmly into the sand, '*this* is the country of the Bedouin.' Neither he nor his companions wore more than a single cloth around their waist, all the rest of the body being left bare. Their hair, which is permitted to flow unconfined as low as their waist, and is usually kept loaded with grease, protects them, in a measure, from the intensity of the sun's rays; but they adopt no other covering."

In another case, the dress of the sheikh and his people, who were of a better sort, consisted of the *aba*, or cloak, procured from Syria or Egypt, and striped vertically black and white, and a loose sort of unbleached cloth extending as low as the knees, and bound round the waist with a leathern girdle, in which was thrust a long crooked knife, or *jambir*, their ammunition, and the apparatus for striking a light, which the Bedouin is never without. The sheikh and a few of his followers only wore the striped red and yellow kerchief, in such general use in other parts of Arabia; and all the tribe, therefore, permitted their hair to grow, which is generally plaited, and reaches as low as the waist.

The dress of the women consists of a wide

cotton gown of a dark color, blue, brown, or black, and a kerchief for the head. They go barefooted at all seasons, and are very fond of personal ornaments. Silver rings are much worn in their ears and noses. All puncture their lips, and dye them blue. Some tattoo their cheeks and other parts of their bodies. They paint their eyelids and eyelashes black with a preparation of lead ore. The Arabs seldom allow their women to be seen. When a stranger is introduced, the cry of "Tarik!" which means "Retire!" warns them at once to disappear. It is reckoned a breach of decorum to look a woman steadfastly in the face.

The usual articles of food are rice, pulse, dates, milk, butter, and flour. The common people eat a coarse and insipid bread. The grain is ground in mills with the hand, or merely bruised between two stones. The dough is rolled into balls and cooked among embers when there is no gridiron, and the bread is usually eaten when only partially baked and hot. Butter is used in every dish; all their food swims in it. In some districts, there is an abundance of vegetables and poultry.

Animal food is but little used, from its being considered unwholesome in hot countries.

All orientals are early risers: the Arabs go to bed about ten, and their first sleep is over shortly after midnight. The poor classes repose upon mats on the ground: those in better condition, on rude bedsteads, with four legs, having the frame crossed by ropes. "Although," says a traveller, "I have known a Bedouin, on a desert journey, travel three days and as many nights, without any slumber, except that obtained on his camel, yet within a town or encampment they will sleep during the greater part of the day, without finding it any interruption to their usual repose at night; and they often expressed surprise that I did not thus indulge." As soon as it is light, an Arab commences his religious exercise, by saying "La illa illella, Mahomuda rusoul Allah;" he then awakens those around him (for in the desert, as on board ship, they usually sleep in groups), and invites them to join in his prayers, which he most commonly begins with a verse from the Koran, intimating that prayer should be preferred to sleep.

Rude in manners, and fierce in general char-

acter, the Arabs are not without courtesy. Not that, in the desert, there is the studied and forced politeness of towns. "Welcome! a thousand times welcome! You are the guest of the holy city. My whole property is at your disposal!" is the language of the obsequious shopkeeper of Mecca to his foreign customer; but this the Bedouin would consider ridiculous. His usual salutation is "Peace be with you!" and, on his departure, he pronounces a simple farewell.

Thoroughly inured to fatigue, the Arabs can endure a great degree of hunger and thirst. Sometimes they travel for days without tasting water, and to abstemious habits we may trace their hardy and athletic frames. They are, indeed, models of sobriety, and never indulge in luxuries, except on the arrival of a stranger, or some festive occasion.

Among the Bedouin domestic industry is but little known. As it is among most other Asiatic people, the Arab enjoys his amusements, and devotes on the weaker sex all the household cares. Sometimes there is a curious inversion of character: the men milk the cattle and ply the distaff, while the women work the loom. The

Arabs are deficient in the mechanical arts. They know little more than the tanning of leather, and the weaving of coarse fabrics. They have a few blacksmiths and saddlers; but the work of artisans is considered degrading. They are, consequently, dependent on foreign supplies. Jidda, the wealthiest town of the same extent in the Turkish dominions, and, consequently, bearing a name that means "rich," is the chief emporium of the Arabian trade. Indian goods are sent from hence to Suez and Cairo, whence they are dispersed over Egypt and the Mediterranean ports.

No potentate of any part of the world is more careful to avoid intermarriage with a plebeian than the Bedouin. Nor would estrangement from the circumstances of Arab life be conducive to happiness.

The Bedouin still retains that passionate love of song, for which his race has ever been distinguished. Whether tending his flock, beguiling the tediousness of a journey, or seated after his evening meal at the fire, the Arab constantly breaks out into some ditty, the theme of which is either love or war. The only accompaniment

is a rude guitar with two strings. Although nothing can be further removed from our idea of melody, yet their sentiment and expression are admirably suited to the scenes they describe, and are also strikingly illustrative of the peculiar character of their minds. Combinations the most harsh and rugged form the most striking feature of their music; as often when their movements are grave and slow, as when they are brisk and lively. In the former, they frequently exhibit much grave and melancholy thought; in the latter, they sometimes spring up simultaneously, and join, to the utmost extent of their voices, in a full chorus.

One trait in the Arab character, of special interest, is a nice sense of honor. This trait shows itself in their universal hospitality. This has come down to them from of old. In their lofty poetry, which will bear a comparison with that of any other people, they laud and extol that Arab who consumes his substance to entertain strangers. Nor can they speak of one in higher terms, than to say, "The fire never goes out on his kitchen hearth, but is always burning, to cook for the stranger, his guest." "Dismount

from your horse in the desert, and enter the Arab's tent," says the Rev. Eli Smith, "and he will entertain you as Abraham did of old, not with the fatted calf, yet with the lamb or kid, with milk and butter; for to be economical on the score of food, is, with the Arabs, the height of meanness. This makes the Arab generous, and thus a feeling of sacredness attaches to the character of guest. Some few are treacherous; but if you want to pass alone through the desert of Arabia, you will be told there is no difficulty: 'We will pass you over to a tribe that is friendly with us, and they will pass you on to one that is friendly with them, and so you will go safely through.' When Professor Robinson and myself were at Jerusalem, wishing to visit the region of the Dead Sea, which was infested by a band of Bedouin, regarded as robbers, we consulted a native friend, and the next day he brought us the captain of the band for our guide. We visited Bethlehem, and slept where Jacob slept at Bethel, and returned in safety."

Still there is a numbering of the hours of hospitality. For three days and eight hours the stranger is a "ward," and after that merely "a

visitor." He is not, however, required to depart, but is expected, if his stay be prolonged, to assist in fetching water, milking the camel, or feeding the horse. Should he refuse those domestic services, he may be allowed to remain, but he will be censured for ingratitude. He is, however, at perfect liberty to go to another tent, where he will not fail to receive a fresh welcome; and in a long journey he may change his tent from time to time till he reaches the place to which he is travelling.

When a man of rank happens to be a visitor, a kid or a lamb is prepared; an inferior guest is regaled with coffee, or bread and melted butter. Sometimes an entire sheep is roasted, a hole being dug in the sand and lined with heated stones, in which the flesh is laid, and then covered all over with cinders and the wet skin of the animal. The meat is cooked in an hour and a half, and, as all the juices are preserved, it has an excellent flavor.

As it was said of Ishmael, "his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him," so it may be declared of his descendants in the desert. An Arab considers plunder as

his right. He does not say "I robbed," but "I gained." He is even said to justify his conduct on the ground of Sarah's cruelty to the mother of Ishmael. In such acts the Arabs are most adroit and audacious. The defenceless traveller is waylaid, seized, and stripped of everything; but, unless he resist, or shed the blood of a Bedouin, his life is safe. They spring behind the horseman, seize him with one hand, and with the other rifle him of his money. Even while the French officers in Egypt were sleeping, they stole their swords from their sides, and purloined clothes and other valuable articles placed beneath their heads. A sort of kinship is sometimes claimed with their victim. "Undress thyself," exclaims the assailant, as he rides furiously up to the traveller; "thy aunt" (his own wife) "is without a garment." A reproof for plunder receives the haughty reply, "You forget that I am an Arab."

Individual followers are always ready to flock in considerable numbers to the standard of some successful sheikh, who promises either daring adventure or rich booty. Hence it is no difficult matter to collect some thousands of free-

booters, sufficient to lay under contribution all who pass by the route near which they hover. On that between Egypt and Palestine, the borders of Syria, and the tract along the Euphrates, large moving encampments continually pass to and fro, observing the progress of the traveller and the caravan, and ready to avail themselves of any favorable juncture. In the interior, among the Bedouin camps, this warlike temper vents itself in almost perpetual petty quarrels with each other. Twice only men of powerful and aspiring genius have succeeded in uniting together these multitudinous tribes, who then formed armies which the mightiest kingdoms of Asia attempted in vain to resist. These irruptions, however, were only transient; and even that of the followers of Mohammed, though it altered the aspect of the rest of the world, left Arabia itself almost wholly unchanged.

A curious instance of demands on travellers occurred to Mr. Carne and his companions; it is thus stated:—"We were stopped at the post of the well known Abu Ghosh. It was a hamlet, consisting of several dwellings, where this

man, who is the chieftain of the small district around, as well as lawgiver, dictator, and sometimes, it is shrewdly said, freebooter, resides. He exacts a tribute as his undoubted right from all travellers who pass this way; and our horses were soon surrounded by this chief and his soldiers, who began to talk loud and fast. It was some minutes before we could understand a word of what they said: we dismounted, however, and sat down on the grass, while one of the soldiers was directed to bring some coffee; and we were asked to stay and partake of some more solid refreshment, but as we knew we should have to pay about ten times the value of the chief's hospitality, and as the dwellings had a villanously dirty appearance, we thought it best to decline the offer.

“Abu Ghosh, who did not in the meantime neglect his interests, pulled out a slip of paper from his pocket, with an air of deep importance; and with much earnest exclamation, he placed it in our hands, as an all-sufficient authority for his demands. The wily chief protested, that, though he did not altogether comprehend its import, he had no doubt it gave him a claim on the purses

of all Frank travellers. On perusing this extraordinary certificate, which was of very small dimensions, we could not help laughing heartily. Abu, who, though a great rogue, was a very handsome fellow, stroked his chin with his hand, fixed his eyes attentively on us with a look of ludicrous importance, while my servant explained to him its meaning. It was written in English by a reverend gentleman, who, in the career of his mission for the fallen people of Israel, had passed that way, and certified to two individuals, his intimate friends, who are eminent for their wealth as well as zeal, and were at this time safe in their comfortable and luxurious homes in England, to this effect, that when they should come to this wild pass, on their way to Jerusalem, they were to be exempted from paying any tax to Abu Ghosh. They were addressed in full, with the title of esquires, and were assured that their reverend friend had received the most honorable treatment at the hands of the said worthy and well-meaning Abu.

“The perusal of such a document in such a place, the exquisite care taken of it by the chief, than whom no moss-trooper was ever a greater

thief, and the purpose to which he applied it, were irresistibly laughable. Abu did not relish our reception of his document, any more than we did the longing looks cast on our baggage by himself and his lawless well-armed attendants. However, after a great deal of clamor and altercation, and the payment of a sufficient fee for the privilege of passing his small territory, we were allowed to depart, after having finished a cup of coffee, and repeated our assurances to the respectable Abu Ghosh, that his document gave him no right to demand money of Frank travellers who might pass that way in future, which he answered only by a significant and unbelieving look, depositing it carefully once more in his bosom."

There is no security from plunder in speaking the same language, or even in professing the same religion. The caravan on its pilgrimage to Mecca is considered to offer as lawful a booty as the bales of the rich merchant, or the stores of one who is accounted an infidel stranger. It must not be supposed, however, that the Arabs are always successful in their hostile enterprises. The instances are many in which their attempts

at plunder have been repelled or followed with fierce retaliation. Mr. Carne describes his being held captive by Hassan, a chief of the Bedouin, in his desolate valley, and of his subsequently suffering a great and even fatal reverse.

A caravan, it appears, was proceeding from Mocha to Cairo: it was rich and very numerous, loaded with coffee and spices, and other articles, and composed of a large number of merchants and attendants. To attack it was not difficult in a country filled with rocks and ravines, especially with so good a look-out as the Arabs generally keep. Had it been otherwise, obstacles though great would have been surmounted; for the position in which these Bedouin lived was so remote from the track of the few caravans that came, that they seldom had an opportunity of obtaining anything valuable. The present caravan offered a rich booty, of which they had gained accurate intelligence, probably from some of the Arabs of other tribes who acted as guides; and they waited the moment of plunder with great anxiety and high-raised hopes.

Much resistance was not anticipated, as it was known the caravan was travelling with a weak

guard; and the numerous attendants and guides, as well as their masters, were more likely to fly than fight. As, however, the intended assailants were by no means remarkable for bravery, they took every precaution to insure success, and made numbers answer the purpose of courage. By day and by night did the camel of Hassan bear his master to the dwelling-places of other sheikhs, in order to mature the plan of attack and acquire the needed force. And a strong muster was ultimately made, as Carne says, of "all the rogues and thieves" in the camp of the chief, and "they were not a few;" and it included also all the spare forces from two or three friendly camps in the same region, though at some distance.

They left their own dwellings beyond the region of Tor without delay, and proceeded, after several days' march, to the other side of the Red Sea. This circuitous route, in which they passed near Suez, brought them into the very track which the caravan was obliged to make in proceeding from Mocha. They took up their position at some distance among high and rocky hills, which effectually screened them from every human eye; and here they waited with true

Arab avidity and patience the arrival of the object of their pursuit. At length the caravan was seen at a distance slowly advancing over the desert; the long trains of camels, the greater part heavily laden, marching with little order, and scattered over the sand; and the merchants riding in groups, or keeping beside their individual effects,—all unsuspecting of impending danger, not only because no spoilers dwelt there, but because it was near the pacha's seat of government.

No sooner, however, did the caravan reach a part of the desert favorable to attack, than suddenly and unexpectedly the Bedouin rushed out, the greater part of the merchants and guides took to flight, and a large booty was captured by the assailants. As spoil was their chief object, they offered no violence or injury to the people. The few merchants who were more tenacious than the rest, remained with their goods, and had their entreaties, that a part at least might be spared, answered with threats and laughter. The others fled, either mounted or on foot, as fast as they could go, bitterly lamenting the destruction of their hopes of gain, or their

being plunged from affluence, having embarked their whole fortune in the venture, into abject poverty.

A strange contrast was presented by the Bedouin. Marching rapidly by night and day, though encumbered with their booty, they arrived in safety at their desert and almost inaccessible camp. To men whose daily luxuries were bounded by dry coarse cakes and coffee, the valuable articles now in their hands presented a rich and rare prize. The usual dress of the wives of Hassan consisted only of the coarse white cotton garments worn in common by the whole tribe, a short tunic with the neck open, and a hood thrown over the head; but how their eyes must have sparkled at the sight of the shawls and rich stuffs spread out before them, and at the turbans—a splendid decoration they had never known! There were articles, too, whose firmness of texture and dazzling colors would have attracted attention even in the streets of the capital: the feelings of those who shared the plunder in these remote solitudes, then, cannot easily be described.

The spoil was enough, in fact, to have out-

lasted Hassan's day, and those also who came after him. But there was some cause for apprehension. The fugitives had found their way to Cairo, and made their complaint, and the pasha, deeply incensed at such "an outrage," as he termed it, in his dominions, doubtless thinking of the duties on the goods, of which he had been deprived by the plunder, sent out a body of troops against the offenders. The Bedouin defended themselves stoutly, but in an action with the Turkish soldiers, Hassan, with several other sheikhs, was taken prisoner. Mr. Carne saw them brought as captives into Cairo, and in a few weeks after they were put to death.

The deserts of Arabia, and the freebooters that traverse them, may still exhibit to the view a marvellous fulfilment of prediction recorded many ages ago in the sacred page. Let no one, however, suppose that this fact militates against the free agency of man, or at all affects the moral character of his actions. All events are foreknown to the Omniscient; and it is with him to inspire a record of any of them, according to the good pleasure of his will. But neither the one nor the other alter, in any degree, the

accountability of the parties concerned. Every one must give account of himself to God of the things done in the body, and it is enough for us to know that the final decision will be that of Him who cannot err.

The Mohammedanism of these sons of the desert sits very loosely upon them. They bear the name of followers of the false prophet, and the few ideas of religion they possess are moulded after his precepts; but they manifest little attachment to it in itself, and live in the habitual neglect of most of its external forms. The impostor adapted his system to them, but the Bedouin know hardly anything of it. Few of them at the present time can read the Koran; and though it prescribes a penalty for those who do not say their prayers five times a day, scarcely one in a hundred knows enough to say them. Robinson states that he never saw any among them repeat the usual Moslem prayers, in which others are commonly so punctual; he was told, indeed, that many never attempt it, and that very few among them were acquainted with the proper words and forms of prayer. It is, however, a striking fact, that while all nominal Christians in the east have

prayers in an unknown tongue, they have theirs in Arabic. The men generally observe the feast called Ramadân, though some do not ; nor do the females keep it.

It may be remarked, that a promise was given to the descendants of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, of the family of Jethro, in the days of 'Jehoia-kim, son of Josiah, king of Judah : "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he hath commanded you, therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever."—Jeremiah xxxv. 18, 19. Jonadab had commanded his sons not to drink wine nor build houses, nor to have vineyard nor seed, but to dwell in tents. These commands they have strictly obeyed, and the promise of God has been remembered. The Rechabites exist as a separate people, and are called by the same name. They are excellent horsemen, and seem to fly through the desert with the speed of the wind.

A missionary describes a most interesting scene

which took place when some of the descendants of the ancient Rechabites found their way into his apartment. These Bedouin Israelites retained the faith of the Old Testament amidst the wild and desultory habits of the Arab; but their habits were peaceable; and though they tilled no land, nor planted nor drank of the vine, they were a regular and well-ordered community. To the missionary all this was a source of inexpressible interest; he listened with rapt attention to the simple yet clear details of these men of the wilderness, who spake of Heber the Kenite, whose wife slew Sisera, as the founder of their race, and stated that, in a hot and thirsty land, they had continued faithful to the command, to drink no wine, for near three thousand years. About three hundred years since a great number of the Rechabites were driven from Yemen. Some of them are now found near the Gulf of Arabia. It appears, indeed, as if there were written on every page of Arabia's extended history, and graven upon every rock in her deserts with a pen more powerful than iron, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

A remarkable change in the history of Arabia

was effected by Abdel Wahab, of the pastoral tribe of Temin, and of the clan called El Wahabe, of which his father was sheikh. He was born in 1691, and on visiting in his youth the principal cities of the east, he was convinced that Islamism had become very corrupt, and determined to undertake its reformation. His talents and learning secured for him respect, and he soon made converts by his writings and his reputation for wisdom.

The system which he originated makes the chief the political and religious ruler of his people. It takes as a fundamental principle the unity of God. It holds Mohammed to have been merely a mortal man, but intrusted with a divine mission. It inculcates a strict adherence to the Koran. It declares the sinfulness of invoking the intercession of departed saints, and of doing especial honor to their remains. It requires the observance of the ordinary rites of Mohammedanism—the number of the prayers, the genuflexions, the fast of the Ramadân—and abstinence from wine and all spirituous liquors.

About the year 1746, while quietly disseminating his doctrines, Wahab was ordered by the

governor of the province to leave his native village, of which for eight years he had been the sheikh. Escaping from the poniard of an assassin, he received a refuge from another sheikh, belonging to the Aeneze tribe. Among this people his efforts were so successful, that he gained, like the impostor whom he followed, much physical force. The ordinary stimulants of Mohammedanism were employed; conquest was declared to be highly meritorious, and a share of the spoil was a present reward. Some of the hordes scattered over the central wastes yielded to his arms, while others rejected all the authority he assumed.

It appears that the only character he proposed to sustain was that of an ecclesiastical ruler, but it was certainly one that blended the qualities of the politician and the warrior. He died at the age of ninety-five, much renowned among his people, called after him the Wahabees, for his powers of persuasion and for his captivating eloquence. His success appears from the fact, that he gathered converts to his views from various tribes of the desert, into a distinct people, under the civil government of Eben Send in civil mat-

ters, and his own as their Iman, or spiritual ruler.

He was succeeded by those who pursued the same course, and for a time the Wahabees did not encroach on the rights of the governments nearest them in Bagdad and Hejaz. The pilgrim-caravans passed through their country unmolested, but afterwards they exacted a tax from all Persian devotees that crossed the desert. Inflamed by various circumstances, Solyman Pasha despatched against them, at length, a great force; the Wahabee chief had prepared for the attack, but it did not take place, though the two armies continued for three days within sight of each other. A truce for six years was now concluded, and both parties returned to their homes.

On the Turks the Wahabees now looked with contempt, the peace was broken, and in 1801, Send, at the head of 20,000 men, attacked Kerbela, and carried it by a fearful assault. Here was a magnificent tomb or mosque, which they were eager to destroy. Over it was suspended a huge pearl; near it lay twenty thousand sabres, mounted with precious stones; and these, with vases, lamps, articles of gold and silver, rubies,

emeralds, and diamonds, became the properties of the leader. Abundant, too, was the spoil for his force, and in five days the city was a heap of smoking ruins.

Soon after, Mecca itself was captured, and here the Wahabees established their power, in lieu of that of the Sultan, who had been previously regarded as the head and protector of the faithful. The residence of Send was now fixed at Dreich, where he occupied a palace and lived in all the splendor of an eastern prince. In 1803 and 1804, he made unsuccessful attacks on Bagdad and Bassora, but took Medina, in the latter year, and in the following Jidda, which had formerly baffled all his attempts to subdue it. The Porte was now obliged to pay a heavy tribute for permission to send an escort to Damascus, with the caravans of pilgrims that annually proceeded to Mecca; but it was required by the Wahabees that the caravans should no longer have weapons, flags, or music, and that they should not enter the holy city, as they had been accustomed to do, on carpets. In 1807, they stood in the zenith of their power, but since then they have been repeatedly repulsed. Some writers

have lamented this fact, supposing that their success was identified with the progress of a purer system than that of "the impostor." But the reform produced by the Wahabees was but slight; they left untouched the impious doctrines of Islamism, and they were as intolerant and sanguinary, if not more so, than Mohammed's earliest followers.

CHAPTER VII.

CEREMONIES AT MECCA—DECLINE OF THE PILGRIMAGE—
STATE AND CHARACTER OF THE ARABS.

THE Mohammedan world must be considered as comprising all who acknowledge the mission of Mohammed and the authority of the Koran. There are, however, within these limits, great diversities of creed and practice. The Romish faith does not differ more widely from that of the reformed churches, than the Mohammedan of the Persian sects does from those of Arabia and Turkey, who are the most strict.

The ritual analogy of Mohammedanism to Judaism is observable throughout its institutions. The legal postures of the ritual are Jewish; its fasts and festivals are adopted from the Jewish calendar; the pilgrimage to Mecca has some resemblance to the ascent to Jerusalem; and Islamism has also its great national sacrifice, its "passover" and its "high priest." The sacrificial rites performed during the pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as the pilgrimage itself, and the honors paid to the Kaaba, with its black stone, and the other sacred places, were, however, of immemorial usage among the Arabians, and were adopted by Mohammed in accommodation to the ancient customs of his country. The great basis of this system is found in the misrepresentations of tradition and the reveries of the Rabbins.

The central truth of the Christian system, the death of Christ upon the cross, is not simply rejected by the Mohammedan creed, but the very fact of his having been actually crucified is denied. The absurd legend substituted for the great truth of the gospel was not, however, invented by Mohammed, it was derived from the heretical teachers who arose in the earliest age of the church.

The resurrection of Christ, a doctrine inseparably connected with the death of the adorable Redeemer, is also by consequence, and in fact, denied by the followers of Mohammed. Thus Islamism rejects the only sure foundation for a sinner's hope, while it shuts out from view the love of God, and holds up no perfect example as the object at once of homage and imitation. It requires no repentance, it produces no contrition; alms-deeds, punctuality in the repetition of prayers, and, above all, valor in the field, are the refuges of lies it offers to its adherents. It provides no means of regeneration, nor indeed supposes it to be possible in the present world. As it reveals no Saviour, no Mediator, so it discovers no Sanctifier, no Comforter. Alike destitute of internal evidence as of external authority, it bears the broad marks of that wisdom which descendeth not from above, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Originating in imposture, and propagated by violence, the fruits it has borne have been pride and intolerance, impurity and fanaticism.

A large part of the religion of the Moslems consisted for a long period in the pilgrimage to

Mecca. It is expressly commanded by the Koran; and, according to a tradition of Mohammed, he who expires without performing it, may as well die a Jew or a Christian. A short sketch of this practice, so long continued, will therefore be desirable.

At a certain distance from the Holy City, all pilgrims are required to strip themselves naked, throwing away their garments, and put on the *ihram*, or *ehram*, two pieces of linen or cotton cloth, generally white, one of them wrapped round the loins, the other thrown loosely over the neck and shoulders, while the head remains wholly uncovered. Burckhardt at once complied with this custom, which has occasioned the death of many; for when the pilgrimage happens in winter, the assumption of the *ihram* is extremely prejudicial to the most robust constitution, more especially to that of the northern Moslems, who have been accustomed to thick woollen clothes; "yet," says Burckhardt, "the religious zeal of some is so ardent, that if they arrive several months previous, they vow, on taking the *ihram*, not to throw it off till after the completion of their pilgrimage to Arafat." It is said, that Haroun-

al-Raschid and his wife Zobeyda once performed the pilgrimage on foot from Bagdad to Mecca, clothed only with the *ihram*; but indulged in the luxury of walking on splendid carpets the whole way.

On entering Mecca, the temple or mosque must be immediately visited, whether the stranger be pilgrim or not. The prescribed ceremonies are, first, to repeat certain prayers in different parts of the temple; then to begin the towaf, or walk round the Kaaba seven times, kissing the black stone at each circuit; then to proceed to the well of Zemzem, and drink as much water as they wish or can get. The second ceremony which the pilgrim has to perform, is, to proceed to the hill of Szafa, and there repeat certain prescribed prayers, before he sets out on "the holy walk," which is along a level spot, about six hundred paces in length, terminating at a stone platform, called Meroua. This walk, which in certain places must be a run, is to be repeated seven times, the pilgrim reciting prayers uninterruptedly, with a loud voice, the whole time. The third ceremony is that of shaving the head, and walking to the Omra, about one hour and a half

from Mecca, chanting ejaculations all the way. The two former ceremonies must, after this, be again repeated. The walk round the Kaaba seven times may be repeated as often as the pilgrim thinks fit, and the more frequently the more meritorious it is considered by these superstitious people.

About seventy thousand persons assembled at Mecca when Burckhardt made his pilgrimage, and submitted to the performance of these ceremonies. This is the least number which the Moslems told Ali Bey there must necessarily be assembled, at every pilgrimage, on Mount Arafat; and that in case any deficiency should occur, angels are sent down from heaven to complete the number—an affecting proof of the gross ignorance in which the Moslems are involved.

Barthema states the Cairo caravan, when he was at Mecca, to have amounted to sixty-four thousand camels. In 1814, the same caravan consisted mostly of Mohammed Ali's troops, with very few pilgrims. But Burckhardt says, that in 1816, a single grandee of Cairo was there with one hundred and ten camels, for the transport of his baggage and retinue, whose travelling

expenses alone, he supposes, could not have been less than ten thousand pounds. Vast numbers of Bedouin used to flock to Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage, and others from every part of Arabia. Many of these pilgrims depend entirely for subsistence, both on the journey and at Mecca, on begging; others bring some small productions from their respective countries for sale.

When all the required ceremonies have been gone through at Mecca, the whole concourse of pilgrims repair together on a certain day to Mount Arafat, some on camels, some on mules or asses, and the greater number barefooted, this being considered the most meritorious way of performing a journey of eighteen or twenty miles. "We were several hours," says Burckhardt, "before we could reach the outskirts of the town, so great was the crowd of camels. Of the half-naked pilgrims, all dressed in the white ihram, some sat on their camels, mules, or asses, reading the Koran, some ejaculated loud prayers, while others abused their drivers, and quarrelled with those near them, who were choking up the passages. Having cleared a narrow pass in the

mountains, the plain of Arafat opened out. Here the different caravans began to disperse in search of places to pitch their tents. Pilgrims were seen in every direction wandering among the tents in search of their companions, whom they had lost in the confusion along the road; and it was several hours before the noise and clamor had subsided."

In the morning, Burckhardt ascended the summit of Mount Arafat, from whence he counted about three thousand tents, dispersed over the plain, of which two-thirds belonged to the two pilgrim caravans, and to the suite and soldiers of Mohammed Ali; "but the greater number of the assembled multitudes were," says our traveller, "like myself, without tents." Those of the wife of Mohammed Ali, the mother of Tousoun and Ibrahim Pasha, were magnificent, the transport of her baggage alone from Jidda to Mecca having required five hundred camels.

Her tent, was, in fact, an encampment, consisting of a dozen tents of different sizes, inhabited by her women, the whole enclosed by a wall of linen cloth, eight hundred paces in circuit, the single entrance of which was guarded by

eunuchs in splendid dresses. Around this enclosure were pitched the tents of the men who formed her numerous suite. The beautiful embroidery on the exterior of this linen palace, with the various colors displayed in every part of it, constituted an object which reminded the traveller of some descriptions in the Arabian Tales of a Thousand and One Nights.

Burckhardt says, he estimated the number of persons assembled on the plain at seventy thousand; and it is deserving of remark, that he is the third traveller who mentions the same number. This enormous mass, after washing and purifying the body according to law, or going through the motions where water was not to be had, now pressed forward towards the mountain of Arafat, and covered its sides from top to bottom. At the appointed hour, the Cadi of Mecca took his stand on a stone platform on the top of the mountain, and began his sermon, to which the multitude appeared to listen in a solemn and respectful silence. At every pause, however, the assembled multitude waved the skirts of their ihrams over their heads, and rent the air with the shouts of "Lebeyk, allahuma, lebeyk!"—

"Here we are at thy commands, O God!" "During the waving of the ihrams," says Burckhardt, "the side of the mountain, thickly crowded as it was by the people in their white garments, had the appearance of a cataract of water; while the green umbrellas, with which several thousand pilgrims, sitting on their camels below, were provided, bore some resemblance to a verdant plain."

As the sun descended behind the western mountains, the Cadi shut his book: instantly the crowd rushed down the mountains; the tents were struck, and the whole mass of pilgrims moved forward across the plain, on their return. Thousands of torches were now lighted; volleys of artillery and of musketry were fired; sky-rockets innumerable were let off; the pasha's band of music played till they arrived at a place called Mezdelfe, when every one lay down on the bare ground, where he could find a spot. Here another sermon was preached, commencing with the first dawn and continuing till the first rays of the sun appeared, when the multitude again moved forward, with a slow pace, to Wady-Muna,

about three miles off, to perform another foolish ceremony.

After it had occupied about two days, in the valley of Muna, there took place a sacrifice of animals, some brought by the several pilgrims, others purchased from the Bedouin on the occasion. The throats of these animals must always be cut with their faces towards the Kaaba. At the pilgrimage in question, the number of sheep thus slaughtered is represented as small, amounting only to six or eight thousand.

The feast being ended, all the pilgrims had their heads shaved, threw off the ihram, and resumed their ordinary clothing; a larger fair was now held, the valley blazed all night with illuminations, bonfires, the discharge of artillery, and fireworks; and the pilgrims then returned to Mecca. Many of the poorer, however, remained to feast on the offals of the slaughtered sheep. At Mecca, the ceremonies of the Kaaba and the Drura were again to be repeated, and then the hadji was thought to be truly performed. Burckhardt makes no mention of any females visiting Arafat, though Ali Bey talks of two thousand. The Mohammedan law prescribes that no unmar-

ried woman shall perform the pilgrimage: and that even every married woman must be accompanied by her husband, or at least by a very near relation; the Shaffay sect does not even allow the latter.

It appears that the pilgrimage to Mecca has of late years greatly declined in attraction. The educated Moslems are mostly of the sect of Mohammed Ali of Egypt. That this, however, is but the exchange of one evil system for another is lamentably evident. "A long residence," says Burckhardt, "among Turks, Syrians, and Egyptians, justifies me in deducing that they are wholly deficient in virtue, honor, and justice, and that honesty is only to be found in their paupers or idiots." The Bedouin are increasingly careless as to the performance of pilgrimage; comparatively few now make the journey to Mecca.

According to Robinson, were a missionary to go among some of the Arab tribes, speaking their language and acquainted with their habits, he would doubtless be received with kindness; and were he to live as they live, and conform to their manners and customs in unimportant things,

he would soon acquire influence and authority among them. In all the intercourse of that traveller with them, he found them kind, good-natured, and accommodating, though, as might be expected, great beggars. Their inveterate predilection for the desert stands in the way of their civilization, but the things that are impossible with men are possible with God. Nothing short of Divine power can overturn habits and modes of life which have come down to them through nearly forty centuries unchanged.

Eli Smith, who has labored among them, has been greatly interested by some traits of Arab character, among which are a nice sense of honor and a generous disposition. As to the vindictiveness of the Bedouin, he says, "he is not naturally blood-thirsty. But he is jealous of his rights, and it has been considered, from time immemorial, a sacred duty to avenge the blood of a relative. It is this feeling which gives them a decided character for independence, a trait possessed even by menial servants, who stand up and raise their voice in the presence of their masters. This was shown when one of the Syrian bishops threatened to excommunicate those Arabs

who came to hear us preach. The consequence was, that our chapel was fuller than ever."

There is much, also, to admire in the patience, perseverance, and endurance of the Arabs. The Bedouin considers it degrading to cultivate the soil; he would rather wander in the desert. And how does he live? On most meagre fare; he will start in the morning with a few pounds of meal, and a small quantity of water. If he find no more when that is gone, he will endure hunger and thirst, and the severest privations, rather than complain. "I once encountered," says Mr. Smith, "a party who had been driven out of their territory, and were approaching Palestine in search of pasture for their flocks. So far as appeared, a few milch camels only furnished them food. I offered one of them a biscuit for a cup of milk; and they offered to exchange more. We gave them some barley which we had brought for our horses; and they ground it, husks and all, made it into a sort of dough on a sheep-skin, buried it in the ashes, and baked it. When they took it out it was burned as black as a coal; yet they ate it with a good relish. Bread baked in this way, with camel's dung for fuel,

is ordinary fare. Sanctify this trait in their character, and what devoted missionaries, what sufferers for Christ's sake, what noble martyrs they would make!

"Another trait in the Arab character is, that he is not disposed to infidelity. Just before going with Mr. Dwight to Armenia, I found it stated in the publication of a Jesuit missionary that the Armenian is religiously inclined. I have since studied the Arab character with reference to this point, and found it true also of them; for while their neighbors, the Greeks, grow up and go over to infidelity, you will scarcely find any infidels among the Arabs. Indeed you cannot insult an Arab more than by calling him an infidel."

The Arabic language, a part of an important family of languages, in the abundance of its roots, the variety of its formations, and the delicacies of its construction, stands prominent among all its sisters. Its purity and copiousness were long an object of national pride. When, after the first conquests of the Mohammedans, its correctness seemed to be endangered through intercourse with strangers, grammarians arose to

fix its rules and secure it from corruption. One writer compiled a dictionary of the pure Arabic language; it contained about 40,000 words, and is still of great value, from the numerous quotations from ancient poems, adduced in illustration. The Arabic language is adapted to every class of composition, from the wild and yet noble lyrics of the sons of the desert to the artless simplicity of their ordinary narratives. Literature and science have alike made it the vehicle of thought and feeling. It has been described as "bridging over" the wide chasm which intervenes between the extinction of classical literature, and the revival of that spirit to which the literature of all modern languages owes its origin. Though confined at first within the bounds of the Peninsula, by circumstances to which we owe the preservation of its pure antique form, yet the spread of Mohammedanism made it the written and spoken language of the whole of western Asia, of eastern and northern Africa, of Spain, and of some of the islands of the Mediterranean; and the ecclesiastical language of Persia, Turkey, and all other lands which have received the Moslem faith.

As Christianity never attained any extensive or permanent influence among the Arabs as a nation, no entire nor publicly sanctioned version of the Bible has been discovered. But, as political events at length made their language the common vehicle of instruction in the East, and that to Jews, Samaritans, and Christians, independent versions of single books were often undertaken, according to the zeal of private persons; or the interests of small communities. As, too, the Arabic language has some relation to the Hebrew, it possesses sufficient analogy to explain and illustrate it, and is of considerable value from its being a living language in which almost every subject has been discussed. The learned Jews, who flourished in Spain from the tenth to the twelfth century, under the dominion of the Moors, were the first who applied Arabic to the illustration of the Hebrew language; and subsequent Christian writers have diligently and successfully used the writings of Arabian historians, geographers, and naturalists in the explanation of the Bible.

It is matter of thankfulness that increased attention is being given to sending forth Medical

Missionaries to people of remote regions, eminently adapted as they are to aid the spread of the gospel of Christ. And of these, Dr. Thompson, stationed at Damascus, describes his being visited by all sects, and among them by some of the chief Moslem families, the true descendants of the prophet. As the result, much prejudice, which has long and greatly prevailed, has been removed. He witnessed the departure of the pilgrims for Mecca, among whom were many Persians, in 1844; and though others in Frank costume were pelted with stones, he and his companions were not the least molested. Dr. Thompson became the medical adviser of the Kahia Bey, the governor of Damascus, who, after being a sufferer for many years, was so grateful for the recovery that ensued, that he sent the physician a present of a young Arab horse. This gift, of course, made a great stir; it was talked of in all directions; and Dr. Thompson thought it had done more to establish him in the confidence of the people than a whole year's hard work would have accomplished. The opportunities of usefulness offered to medical men of

decided and ardent piety, especially in the heathen world, should call forth our earnest prayers that many may be raised up to devote themselves to missionary service. Dr. Barclay, the American Christian missionary, who, with his family, spent four years in Jerusalem, gained much favor in the eyes of the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, by his skill in medicine and surgery, employed gratuitously in their behalf. His labors were worthy of all praise.

Little has yet been done, unhappily, for the Arab race. The means of education among them are extremely limited, and of a very humble kind. There is, for instance, a village school for Arab boys in the mountains east of Damascus. A pile of old, strange-looking shoes appears at the door; they are necessary to protect the feet of the scholars as they tread on the rough stones of the mountain parts, but their bare-legged owners squat on the earthen floor, wearing simple dresses and red skull-caps. A missionary vividly pictures the singular scene:—

"The noise has stopped a little, and eyes that should be on their books are gazing on your English dress. No doubt the red skull-caps and gown-like dresses of the Arab boys are equally strange to you. But see, the teacher is putting a speedy end to the brief moment of silence. He will never allow that; he must show off to better advantage before the *hoaja** (gentlemen); so, whip in hand, each blow increases the din. The idlers make amends in clamor for what they have lost in time; those reading aloud read louder, and those who have no book to read bawl with all their might in imitation of their neighbors. One teacher I have seen give a dose of the *korbaj* (whip) to all, good or bad, dealing a blow and a scold to each, and then sit down quite vain of such a display of his superior excellence as a teacher. The noisy mob before you is really as confused as it seems to be. Classes are things unheard of here. No two boys have the same lesson, few the same book; many only part of a book, and some none at all. Each one recites alone when he does re-

* Khawadger.

cite, and the teacher gives just so much attention to the lesson as he can spare from the oversight of the noisy throng before him. So it often happens that the scholar repeats his lesson by rote; he has gone over it so often that he has got it by heart. He will read a psalm with ease in his own book: give him another with the same psalm on an opposite page, and he cannot find the place. Try him in the alphabet, and he cannot make out one letter from another. Or what would you say to an old man looking through his spectacles on the page a boy is reading, while his hand is poking at random among the crowd a cane that reaches half across the room? You may smile, but I have seen the idle watch the strange movements of the long rod, and shun the stroke; while the poor fellow, so intent on his book that he did not see it, got a blow for his pains!"

The time to favor the Arab race shall yet come. In the following expressive strains, Isaiah especially predicts the final ingathering of the sons of Ishmael, for Sheba, Kedar, and Nebaioth are all countries of Arabia:—

“The multitude of camels shall cover thee,
The dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;
All they from Sheba shall come:
They shall bring gold and incense;
And they shall show forth the praises of the Lord.

“All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee:
They shall come up with acceptance on mine altar,
And I will glorify the house of my glory.”—Is. ix. 6, 7.

THE END.



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